Heidi

by

Johanna Spyri

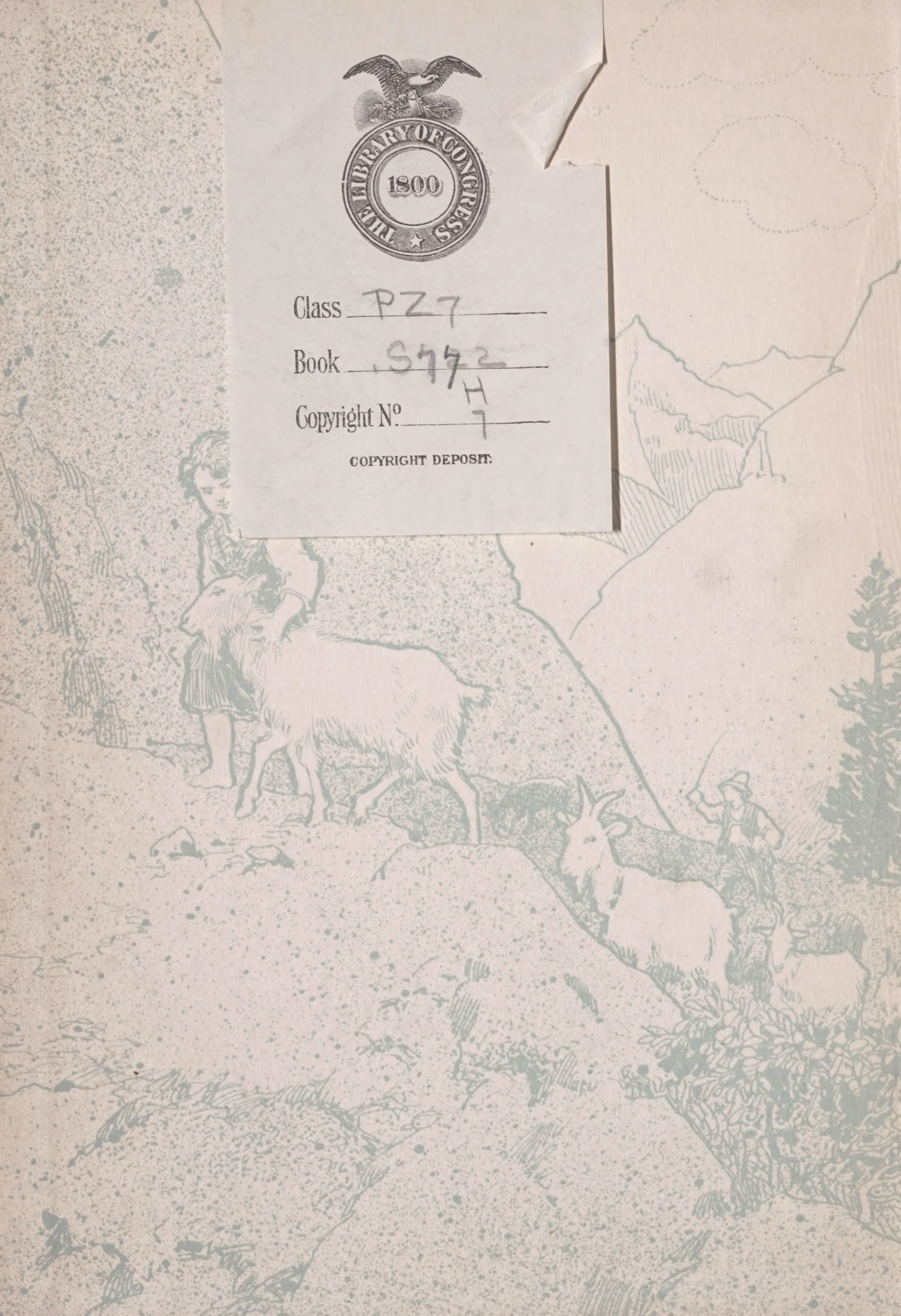
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See page 30.

Heidi stroked first one and then the other of the two goats.

HEIDI

By JOHANNA SPYRI

Translated by

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CHAPTER I

ON THE WAY TO THE ALM-UNCLE

FROM the pleasantly situated old town of Mayenfeld a footpath leads through green fields, thickly studded with trees, to the foot of the mountains which rise abruptly here, and gaze down in calm majesty on the valley below. After the path begins to ascend, it soon reaches the heath country where the spicy fragrance of mountain shrubbery greets the wayfarer, for now the ascent is direct and steep to the Alps above.

One bright and sunny morning in June, a young woman, evidently a sturdy daughter of this highland region, was toiling up this narrow mountain path, leading a little girl by the hand. The child's face was crimson with a glow which even the dark coat of tan on her cheek could not hide. And no wonder; for despite the heat of a summer sun the little one was bundled up as if for the sharpest winter weather. She could not be more than five years old, although the real child was hardly to be discerned in the shapeless little figure that toiled wearily along under the weight of two, yes, even three dresses worn one over the other, while a red cotton kerchief was wrapped round and round the

little body, and the feet were thrust into a pair of heavy hob-nailed shoes.

An hour's climb brought the two travellers to the hamlet lying halfway up to the Alm,[1] and known as "the Dörfli" [2] where they were hailed from every side—here, from an open window, yonder, from a doorway, or by the people in the street; for this was the young woman's native place. She did not stop, however, but answered all questions and greetings as she hurried along, until she reached the last of the straggling houses at the end of the village; here a voice called out through the open door:—

"Wait a moment, Dete; I will go with you if you are going up the mountain."

The young woman stood still. Quickly freeing her hand from her companion's, the child sat down on the grass.

"Are you tired, Heidi?" asked Dete.

"No," was the reply, "I am hot."

"We are almost there now," said Dete encouragingly. "If you will be brave a little longer and take long steps, we shall get there in an hour."

A stout, good-natured looking woman now came out of the house and joined the two. The child jumped to her feet, and, falling a few paces be-

1 Pasture land in the Alps where, owing to the great altitude, or inaccessible location, neither people nor cattle can remain during the winter.

2 Little village.

hind, followed the two friends, who were soon deeply engaged in discussing the affairs of all the people in Dörfli and the country round about.

"But where do you intend to take the child, Dete?" asked the newcomer. "She is your dead sister's child, isn't she?"

"Yes, she is Adelheid's little girl, and I am taking her to her grandfather, to leave her with him."

"What! the child is to stay with the Alm-Uncle? You must be a little daft, Dete! How can you think of such a thing? But the old man will send you both off fast enough, and so put an end to your plans."

"He can't do that; he is the child's grandfather, and must take care of her. I have provided for her until now, and you may be sure, Barbel, that I shall not let the child stand between me and a place such as I have in view. He must do his part now."

"To be sure, if he were like other folks," replied Barbel earnestly. "But you know the kind of man he is. What can he do with a child? And such a little one, at that? She'll run away from him, Dete. But where do you expect to go?"

"To Frankfort," replied Dete. "I have the promise of a very good place there. The people who want me were at the Baths last summer, and I took care of their rooms. It was last summer

that they first asked me to go with them; but I couldn't get away then. Now they are here again, and want me, and I do not mean to lose the place this time, you may be sure."

"I wouldn't like to be in the child's place," cried Barbel with a gesture of aversion. "Who knows what ails the old man up there! He never has anything to do with a living soul. All the year round he never sets foot in a church; and when once in a great while he does come down into the village with his big stick, everyone is afraid of him and gets out of his way. And no wonder; for with his bushy, gray eyebrows and horrid, long beard, he looks like an old heathen, and we are all glad enough not to be alone when we meet him."

"Nevertheless he is the child's grandfather," replied Dete stubbornly, "and must take care of her. He'll do her no harm; and if he does, he will have to answer for it, and not I."

"I'd like very much to know what the old man has on his conscience," said Barbel insinuatingly. "It must be something evil that makes him look so fierce, and keeps him up there on the Alm with never a soul to speak to. People say all manner of things about him. Your sister probably told you about it, Dete; didn't she?"

"Yes, she did; but I never talk about it. Should he hear that I did, he'd make me suffer for it."

But Barbel had long wanted to learn more about the Alm-Uncle—why he looked so fierce and lived all alone up on the mountain; why no one could be induced to talk about him, as though afraid to be against him, and yet unwilling to be for him. Nor did Barbel know why the old man was called the Alm-Uncle by all the village people; he surely could not be uncle to them all. But since every one called him "Ohi," which in the dialect of the neighborhood means uncle, she did likewise, and always spoke of him as "the Ohi."

It was only lately that Barbel had come, as a bride, to Dörfli; before that, she had lived down in the Prättigau valley; and so she was not yet familiar with all that had happened in the village in years past, nor with the affairs of all the people who lived there, or in the surrounding country.

Her good friend Dete, on the contrary, was born in Dörfli, and had lived there until a year ago, when her mother died; after that she went as chambermaid to a large hotel in Ragaz, a summer resort near by. It was from there that she and the child had come this morning, one of Dete's friends having carried them as far as Mayenfeld in a hay-wagon which he was driving home.

Barbel was determined not to let so good an opportunity as this pass without learning what she

wanted so much to know. Slipping her arm through Dete's, she said coaxingly:—

"You are the very one from whom to learn what is the truth and what has been added to it by the gossips. You, no doubt, know the whole story. Do tell me what is the matter with the old man, and whether he was always so cross and so avoided by everyone."

"Whether he was always so is more than I can tell you, as I am just twenty-six, and he must surely be seventy years old; so you can hardly expect me to have known him in his youth; now can you, Barbel? But if I were sure that it would not become the talk of all Prättigau, there is many a thing that I could tell you about him. My mother came from Domleschg, and so did he."

"Oh pshaw, Dete! What do you think of me? Our gossip in Prättigau is not as bad as it is painted," was Barbel's rather indignant reply. "And, besides, I can keep a thing or two to myself when necessary. Now do tell me," she added coaxingly, "and you'll have no reason to regret it."

"Well then, I will; but you must keep your promise," said Dete warningly. Before beginning, she glanced back to make sure that the child was not near enough to hear what she said. But the little one was not to be seen; she had evidently fallen behind some time ago and had then ceased

to follow the two friends who had been too much absorbed in their conversation to notice it. Dete stood still and looked in every direction. The path made a number of turns, but nevertheless was visible almost all the way down to Dörfli; but no one was anywhere to be seen on it.

"There she is. Do you see her yonder?" exclaimed Barbel, pointing to a spot far to one side of the path. "She is climbing up the cliffs with Goat-Peter and his flock. I wonder why he is taking his goats up so late to-day! But it is very fortunate, for now he can take care of the child, and you can go on with your story."

"The 'taking care of' Peter will not find a very great task," remarked Dete; "for she is far from stupid for a child of five. She keeps her eyes open and sees what is going on about her. I have found that out, and it is well for her that she does; for the old man has nothing now but his two goats and his hut."

"Did he ever have more?" asked the curious Barbel.

"What, he? Well, I should think so!" exclaimed Dete. "He once owned the finest farm in Domleschg. He was the elder of two sons, his brother being a quiet and industrious young man. But the older one would do nothing but play the gentleman, travel about the country, and seek the

company of wild young people of whom no one knew anything. With his gambling and drinking, he lost all the family property, and when his father and mother learned of it, they died of grief, one after the other. His brother, when he found himself a beggar, left his home and went out into the world, no one knows where. When the older one saw that he had nothing left but a bad name, he disappeared too. At first no one knew whither; then it was rumored he had enlisted as a soldier in Naples; after that nothing was heard of him for fully twelve or fifteen years. Then, all at once, he appeared again in Domleschg, bringing with him a half-grown boy for whom he wanted to find a home among his relatives. But every door was closed against him, and no one would have anything to do with him. This made him very bitter, and he declared he would never set foot in Domleschg again; and so he came here with his boy and lived in Dörfli. His wife, whom he married in the south, and lost soon afterward, was probably one of the same kind as himself. He must have had a little money left, however, for he had his son Tobias taught a trade, that of carpenter. The boy grew up to be a quiet, well-behaved fellow whom everybody liked. But no one trusted the old man. It was said that he had deserted from the army in Naples because he had killed a

man; not in battle, you know, but in a quarrel. But we recognize the relationship; for my mother's grandmother and his grandmother were first cousins. So we called him 'Uncle,' and as nearly all of the people of the village are relations of ours on my father's side, they all called him Uncle too; then, when he went up to the Alm to live, they called him the 'Alm-Uncle.' "

"And what became of Tobias?" asked Barbel eagerly.

"Wait a bit, and you will hear; I can't tell you everything in a breath!" declared Dete. "Well, Tobias was sent to Mels to learn his trade, and as soon as he had learned it he came back here to Dörfli, and soon afterward married my sister Adelheid. They had always been fond of each other, and after they were married they lived very happily together. But it did not last long. Only two years later, Tobias was killed by a falling beam while he was at work on a new house. The shock of seeing him so disfigured, together with the grief at his loss, threw Adelheid into a violent fever from which she did not recover. She was never very strong, and sometimes had strange attacks, when we could not tell whether she was awake or asleep. Only a few weeks after Tobias died, we buried her too. Then the sad fate of the young couple became the talk of the neighborhood, and it began

to be whispered that it was a terrible retribution for the sinful life the Uncle had led; he was even told so to his face. Our good pastor talked to him, too, and urged him to repent; but it was to no purpose; he only grew more fierce and sullen, spoke to no person, and was avoided by everyone.

"Soon afterward we heard that he had gone up to the Alm, and only came down when obliged to; since then, he has lived all alone up there, at enmity with God and man.

"Adelheid's baby we took, mother and I; it was only a year old. Last summer, when mother died, I sent the child to board with old Ursel up in Pfäffersdorf; for I wanted to earn something down at the Baths. As I can sew and mend, I found plenty of work there in the winter, too. Early in the spring the Frankfort family whose rooms I had cared for at the hotel, returned, and now they want me to go home with them. Day after to-morrow we leave. It is a good place, that I know."

"And you really mean to leave the child with the old man up yonder? I am surprised that you can do such a thing, Dete," said Barbel reproachfully.

"What do you expect me to do?" retorted Dete. "I have done my duty by the child. What else can I do with her? I surely cannot take a child

not yet five years old to Frankfort with me. But where are you going, Barbel? We are nearly half way up to the Alm now."

"And I have just got to where I am bound. Goat-Peter's mother does spinning for me in the winter, and I wanted to speak to her about it. So good-bye Dete; good luck to you!"

Dete shook hands with her companion, and then stood looking after her as she went into the little dark-brown mountain cottage which stood a little to one side of the path in a hollow, where it was somewhat protected from the mountain winds. The tiny house lay about halfway between Dörfli and the Alm above; and it was well that it stood in so sheltered a spot, for it looked so crazy and dilapidated that to live in it must have seemed rather perilous when the mighty south wind swept the mountain. Then every board in the old house shook, the doors and windows rattled, and the worm-eaten timbers groaned and trembled. On such days, had the little house stood up on the Alm, it would have been swept at a blast into the valley below.

It was Goat-Peter's home. He was a boy of eleven, who daily went down to Dörfli to get the goats and drive them up to the Alm, where they grazed on the short and nourishing herbs until evening. Then he and all his nimble-footed

charges went skipping down the mountain side, and as soon as they reached Dörfli, Peter gave a shrill whistle through his fingers to announce their arrival at the village square, where the goats were turned over to their owners. Most of those who came for them were little boys and girls, for the goats were harmless creatures whom no one had cause to fear. During the whole summer long, this was the only occasion on which Peter met companions of his own kind; all the rest of the day he spent with his goats.

To be sure, at home he had his mother and blind old grandmother; but since he had to be off very early in the morning, and in the evening lingered as long as possible with the children in Dörfli, he was at home only long enough to swallow his breakfast of bread and milk in the morning, and a supper of like kind in the evening, and then hurry to bed.

His father, who had been accidentally killed while felling trees, had been called Goat-Peter before him, for in his youth he, too, had been the goatherd. Owing to this combination of circumstances, Peter's mother, whose real name was Brigitte, was called Mistress Goat-Peter, and the blind old grandmother was known far and wide, by both old and young, simply as "grandmother."

Dete waited about ten minutes for the children

to come along with the goats. After looking all round without seeing anything of them, she climbed a little higher to where she could get a view of the whole mountain slope. From this eminence she peered in every direction with strong signs of impatience both in her face and motions.

Meanwhile the children were approaching by a very roundabout way, for Peter knew of many a sheltered nook where his goats could get an abundance of nourishing leaves to nibble from bush and shrub; to find them, he drove his flock by most devious ways to the pastures above.

At first the child, clad in her dress of many thicknesses, followed him with great difficulty, panting with heat and fatigue. She did not say a word, but her eyes followed the boy's every movement as, in his short trousers and bare feet, he sprang lightly from place to place; then she looked at the goats whose slender little legs carried them even more easily over bush and boulder, and up the steepest cliffs. Suddenly she sat down and quickly took off her shoes and stockings; then, getting on her feet again, she pulled off the thick red kerchief, unbuttoned her little dress, and was soon rid of that. But there was still another to be taken off, for Aunt Dete had prudently put the Sunday dress on the little girl first, and then the one she wore every day over it, so that she herself

might have a smaller bundle to carry. In a twinkling the last dress was off too, and the child stood there in her little petticoat, holding up her chubby arms with delight to be cooled by the breeze, for now they were bare save for the short sleeve of her chemise.

Laying all the discarded garments carefully one upon the other, she joined Peter and his goats, and, free from every hindrance, skipped and scrambled along as lightly as the fleetest of her companions.

Peter had not noticed what the child was about when she remained behind, and now, as all at once he saw her come running along in her new costume, he drew his face into a broad grin of amusement; and when he glanced back and saw the neat little heap of clothes on the ground, his smile widened until his mouth reached nearly from ear to ear; but he did not say a word.

With the child's newly gained feeling of ease and comfort came the desire to talk to Peter, and he, too, found his tongue to answer the many questions she had to ask. She wanted to know how many goats he had, where he was taking them, and what he would do when he got there.

Thus the children arrived at last in front of the little house, where Dete espied them. Hardly had she caught sight of the merrily approaching little company when she cried out with horror:—

"Heidi, what have you done? What does this mean? Where is your best frock, and the other one, and the red kerchief? And where are the new shoes I bought for you to wear up on the mountain? And the stockings I knit for you? They are all gone! All gone! Heidi, what have you done with them? Where are they all?"

Pointing calmly down the mountain, the child said: "There."

Her aunt followed the direction of the chubby finger, and there, far below, she saw a little heap of something with a red speck on top; that must surely be the red kerchief.

"Oh, you naughty child!" cried the indignant Dete. "What possessed you? Why did you take off your things? What does it mean?"

"I don't need them," said the child without the least sign of regret for what she had done.

"Oh you child of calamity! You foolish Heidi! Don't you know anything?" continued Dete, lamenting and scolding by turns. "How are we to get them? It will take a half hour to go down there and back again. Come, Peter; you run down and fetch the things. Come, run along, and don't stand there staring at me as though you had taken root."

"I am late already," said Peter slowly and without stirring a foot from the place where he had

stood with his hands thrust into his breeches pockets listening to Dete's exclamations of anger and dismay.

"You'll not get far by standing there and opening your eyes as big as saucers," cried Aunt Dete. "Come, you shall have something nice. Do you see this?"

She held up a new coin whose glitter quickly caught Peter's eye. With a bound he was off down the mountain, making amazing leaps in a straight line toward the little heap of clothing, which he soon reached. Picking the things up, he returned with them so quickly that Dete had nothing but praise for him as she gave him his well-earned money.

With a beaming face Peter hastily thrust it into the farthest corner of his pocket, meanwhile bestowing a broad smile on Dete, for it was not often that he acquired so great a treasure.

"You may carry the bundle for me as far as the Uncle's. You pass his hut on the way to the Alm, don't you?" said Aunt Dete as she began to climb the steep ascent just back of Goat-Peter's little home.

The boy undertook his new duty very willingly. Thrusting the bundle under his left arm, and swinging the long stick with which he kept his flock in order in his right hand, he followed close

at Dete's heels, while Heidi and the goats skipped and capered merrily along by his side.

In this happy fashion the little company journeyed upward, and in about three-quarters of an hour reached the height where the pasture lands begin. Here stood the Uncle's hut on a jutting ledge, exposed to every wind that blew, but getting every ray of sunshine as well, and a beautiful view of the valley beside. Behind the little house stood three tall old pine trees with long, thick branches that had never been trimmed. Beyond them the mountain rose again in an unbroken ascent, the lower slopes, still beautifully green and rich with fragrant herbs; above these, only straggling bushes among the stones, and at last, the bare, and hoary cliffs against the sky.

Against the side of the hut which overlooked the valley the Uncle had set a bench he had made. It was here that he was now sitting, with his pipe in his mouth, and his hands on his knees, calmly watching the approach of the children, the goats and, last of all, Aunt Dete, who had long been overtaken and left behind by the others.

Heidi was the first one up; walking straight toward the old man she held out her hand to him and said: "Good day, grandfather."

"Well, what does this mean?" asked the old man gruffly, barely taking the child's hand in his, but

giving her a long and searching glance from under his bushy eyebrows.

The little girl returned his look of inquiry without so much as the quiver of an eyelash, for this old grandfather with his long beard and thick gray eyebrows that met over his nose and looked strangely like some sort of underbrush, was so interesting a sight that Heidi could hardly take her eyes off of him.

Meanwhile her Aunt Dete had reached the house together with Peter, who remained standing awhile to see what was going to happen.

"I wish you a very good day, Uncle," said Dete. "I am bringing you Tobias and Adelheid's little girl. You will hardly know her, for you have not seen her since she was a year old."

"And what is the child to do up here with me?" asked the old man curtly. "And you, there," he called out to Peter, "be off with your goats! You are none too early now. And take mine with you."

Peter did not wait to be told again, but disappeared at once, for the Uncle had given him a look of which one was enough.

"She is to stay with you, Uncle," was Dete's answer to his question. "I think I have done all that can be expected of me these four years past. It is time you did something for her now."

"Oh, indeed!" said the old man with a look of angry contempt at Dete. "Suppose she begins to cry for you and whimpers, as foolish little creatures so often do, what is to be done then?"

"That is for you to say," retorted Dete. "No one told me what to do with her when she was left on my hands, a baby only one year old, and I had already all I could do to provide for mother and myself. Now I must go where I can earn more money, and you are her next of kin. If you cannot keep her, do as you think best with her; but if she comes to grief, it will be on your conscience, and I should think you had enough to answer for already."

Dete's own conscience was far from easy in the matter; that was why she grew so angry and said more than she meant. At her last words the Uncle jumped to his feet, and with a look in his eyes before which Dete drew back with fear, he pointed down the path, and said in a voice of command:—

"Be gone to where you came from, and don't show your face up here again in a hurry!"

Dete did not need to be told twice. Calling out a hasty good-bye to him, and "Good-bye to you too, Heidi," she turned and ran down the mountain path as if driven by a steam engine. Her anger and excitement did not allow her to slacken

her pace until she got to Dörfli, where she was now even more eagerly questioned than she had been in the morning. The people wondered what had become of the child, for they all knew Dete, and whose child Heidi was, as well as all that had befallen her. When from every door and window Dete was hailed with the questions: "Where is the child? Dete, what did you do with the child?" she called back more and more impatiently: "With the Alm-Uncle! Up with the Alm-Uncle, I tell you!"

It was the exclamations of the women that made Dete so uncomfortable, for on every side she heard them say, "How could you do it!" "The poor little thing!" "To think of leaving such a helpless little child up there!" and then, again and again, "Oh, the poor thing!"

Dete ran faster and faster, and was glad when she was beyond the reach of their tongues, for she felt far from easy about what she had done, especially when she remembered how her dying mother had charged her to care for the child. But she quieted her conscience with the thought that if she earned a great deal of money, she could before long do something for Heidi again; and so she was glad that she would soon be far away from those who might persuade her otherwise, and in a place where she would get good wages.

CHAPTER II

WITH THE GRANDFATHER

WHEN Dete had gone, the old man seated himself on his bench again. He said not a word, but puffed great clouds of smoke from his pipe as he sat staring at the ground before him.

Meanwhile Heidi was making a cheery inspection of her new surroundings. The first thing she discovered was the goat-shed. She peered into it, but found it empty. Continuing her investigations she soon found herself behind the hut under the three tall pines through which the wind was sweeping. As it tossed their great branches to and fro, it made a rush and roaring sound. Heidi stood still and listened. When it grew more quiet, the child went on around the corner of the hut and arrived in front again, where her grandfather was sitting. Finding him in the same position in which she had left him, she placed herself before him with her hands clasped behind her, and looked earnestly at him.

Glancing up at her the old man said: "What do you want to do now?"

"I want to see what you have in there, in your house," was the child's reply.

"Come on, then," said her grandfather, as he rose and went toward the door. "Pick up your bundle and bring it along," he added as he entered.

"I shan't need those things any more," declared Heidi.

The old man turned and looked keenly at the child whose black eyes were bright with eager anticipation of all that was to be seen within.

"It can't be that she is simple," he muttered to himself, and then added aloud: "Why will you not need them?"

"I want to run about like the goats; they have such light little legs."

"Well, you may, if you like; but bring the things; they can be put into the closet," were the grandfather's orders.

Heidi obeyed. The old man opened the door, and she followed him into a large room which, being the only one, was as wide and long as the hut itself. In the middle stood a table with a chair beside it; in one corner was the grandfather's bed, while in another a large kettle hung in the hearth; in the opposite wall was a large door which her grandfather opened; it was the closet. In it hung his clothes, while his shirts, stockings and neckcloths lay folded on one of the shelves; on another stood some plates, cups and glasses, and on the top-most lay a round loaf of bread, smoked meat

and cheese; the closet contained all that the old man needed to supply his wants.

As soon as the closet was open Heidi ran in and tucked her bundle as far under her grandfather's clothes as possible, that it might not be easily found again. Coming back into the room she looked all around, and said:—

"Where am I to sleep, grandfather?"

"Where you like," was his reply.

Nothing could have pleased Heidi better. She ran into every corner and peered into each little nook to find the place where she would like best to sleep. In the corner where stood her grandfather's bed, a little ladder led to the floor above. Heidi climbed up it and found herself in the hayloft, where lay a heap of fragrant hay, while low in the slanting roof was a round loophole through which she could look far away into the valley below.

"This is where I want to sleep," Heidi called down. "It's a fine place. Come up and see how pretty it is, grandfather!"

"I know very well," came the answer from below.

"I am going to make the bed now," cried Heidi as she ran busily back and forth; "but you must bring me a sheet. A bed has to have a sheet, you know. That is what we lie on."

"Oh, indeed!" muttered the old man downstairs; but presently he went to the closet and after

rummaging awhile, he drew forth a long piece of coarse cloth from under his shirts; it was the nearest approach to a sheet that he had. Taking it up to the loft he found a very neat little bed made there. At its head the hay was piled high to serve as a pillow, and was so arranged that it faced the loophole through which the valley could be seen.

"That is well done," was the grandfather's comment, "now let us spread the cloth. But wait a bit," he added, as he took up a huge armful of hay and made the bed twice as thick as it had been, so that the hard floor could not be felt through at all. "There; now bring it here."

Heidi quickly picked up the cloth, but could hardly carry it, it was so heavy; and that was an advantage, for the sharp spears of hay could not pierce it. The two now spread the sheet over the hay, and where it was too long or too wide Heidi deftly tucked it under, giving the bed a very neat and tidy appearance. When it was made, she stood looking at it thoughtfully.

"We have forgotten something, grandfather," she said.

"What is it?" he asked.

"The coverlet; for, you know, when we go to bed we always get between the sheet and the coverlet."

"Oh, indeed! Well, suppose I haven't any," said the old man.

"Oh, then, no matter, grandfather! We can take more hay for a coverlet," was Heidi's consoling reply as she turned at once to the heap of hay beside her. But her grandfather stopped her.

"Wait a moment," said he, and went down the ladder to his own bed. Presently he came back and laid a large, heavy linen bag on the floor.

"Isn't this better than hay?" he asked. In her effort to spread it out, Heidi pulled it back and forth with all her might and main, but it was too heavy for her little hands. Her grandfather helped, and soon it was spread over the bed making it look so neat and proper that Heidi stood before her new couch with wondering admiration, and exclaimed: "That is a lovely coverlet! My new bed is a fine one! Now I wish it were night so I could get into it."

"It seems to me we might have something to eat first," said her grandfather. "What do you say to that?"

In her eagerness to make her bed, Heidi had forgotten all else; but now, at the suggestion of something to eat, she suddenly felt very hungry, for she had eaten nothing since her early breakfast of bread and weak coffee, and since then she had made the long journey up the mountain. So she agreed readily enough with a prompt: "Yes, I think so too."

"Well then, since we are of one mind, let us go down," said the old man, and followed the child down the ladder. Then he went to the hearth, pushed back the large kettle and drew forward a smaller one that hung on the chain. Seating himself before it on the round, three-legged stool, he blew into the embers and soon had a bright blaze. Then the kettle began to boil, while under it a large piece of cheese was toasting on the end of a long fork which the old man turned round and round until the cheese was golden yellow on every side. Heidi looked on with the greatest interest. Suddenly a new thought must have come to her, for she jumped up and ran to the closet and went busily back and forth a number of times. When her grandfather turned to the table with the kettle in one hand, and the fork with the toasted cheese in the other, he found it already set with two plates, and the loaf of bread neatly placed in the middle; for Heidi had noticed well all that was in the closet and knew what was needed for a meal.

"Well done! I am glad to see that you have ideas of your own," said the grandfather, as he laid the cheese on a piece of bread. "But there is something lacking."

Heidi looked about her, and seeing the kettle steaming so invitingly, she ran back to the closet. But on its shelves only one little bowl was to be

seen; but Heidi was not long at a loss to know what to do. Behind the bowl stood two glasses; in a twinkling the little girl returned to the table with the bowl and one glass.

"That is right; you know how to manage. But where will you sit?" said her grandfather who was himself seated on the only chair in the room. Quick as an arrow the child was over at the hearth, and back again with the three-legged stool on which she seated herself.

"Well, now you have a chair, to be sure, but it is rather low," said her grandfather; "even my chair would be too low for you to reach the table; but come, it is time you had something to eat."

So saying he rose, filled the bowl with milk, and set it on the chair which he placed in front of the three-legged stool on which Heidi was sitting, and so made a very nice table for the little girl. Then he laid beside the bowl of milk a large slice of bread with a piece of the golden-brown cheese on it, and said:—

"Now eat!"

The corner of the table served the old man as a seat, and now the meal was begun. Heidi took her bowl and drank and drank without stopping once, for all the thirst of her long journey must be satisfied. Then she drew a long breath—for her eagerness to drink had left her no time to breathe,—and set down the bowl.

"Do you like the milk?" her grandfather asked.

"I never tasted such good milk before," answered Heidi.

"Then you must have some more."

So saying her grandfather filled the bowl to the very brim, and set it before the child, who took a bite of the bread on which she had spread the cheese which, still warm from the toasting, was as soft as butter. The bread and cheese were very good together and after every savory mouthful Heidi took a drink of milk and looked very content and happy.

When the meal was over her grandfather went out to the goat stable where he found much to do, and Heidi's eyes followed him everywhere, as, first he swept it clean, and then spread fresh straw about for the goats to sleep on; then, as he went into his workshop, and cut some round sticks, and afterward a board into which he bored four holes, and fitted the round sticks into them. Then he set it on the floor, and, behold! it was a chair just like his own, only much higher. Heidi opened her eyes wide with astonishment and stood speechless with amazement.

"What is that?" asked her grandfather.

"That is a chair for me, because it is so high; all at once it was made," said the child still filled with wonder and admiration.



Heidi took her bowl and drank and drank.

"She knows a thing when she sees it, and keeps her eyes open," muttered the old man to himself. He now employed himself about the hut, driving a nail in here, another there; fastening a hinge on the door, and, as he passed from place to place with his hammer and nails and bits of wood, leaving everything a little better for his mending. Heidi followed close at his heels watching him with eager attention, for it was all very interesting to her.

And so evening came on. The sighing of the old pines grew louder and louder; a mighty wind was sweeping over the mountain, and as it swayed the great branches of the trees, made them sigh and moan. The sound pleased Heidi and filled her heart with delight; she grew so merry that she skipped and danced about under the old trees as though she were having the happiest time of her life. Her grandfather stood in the doorway and watched the child.

Suddenly a shrill whistle was heard. Heidi stopped her dancing, and the old man stepped outside. Down the mountain, hopping and skipping, came the flock, goat after goat, like a game of tag, with Peter in the midst of them.

With a cry of delight Heidi rushed to meet the merry troop, and greeted with joy each and all of her friends of the morning. When they reached

the hut they all stood still, and from out the flock stepped two sleek and pretty goats—a white one and a brown one. Running up to the grandfather they eagerly licked his hands in which he held a little salt, a treat with which he always welcomed the pretty creatures on their return in the evening. Peter and the rest of his flock disappeared down the mountain.

Heidi stroked first one and then the other of the two goats that had remained; then she ran round them to stroke the other side of their glossy coats, and was as happy as could be over the little creatures.

"Are they ours, grandfather? Are they both ours? Are they going into the stable? Will they stay with us always?" eagerly asked the happy child, giving her grandfather hardly time enough to get his repeated answer of, "Yes, yes," between her questions. When the goats had licked up all the salt, the old man said:—

"Run in and get your bowl and the bread."

Heidi obeyed and soon returned with them. Her grandfather now milked the white goat; after filling the child's bowl, he cut a slice of bread for her and said:—

"Now eat, and then go up to bed. Your Aunt Dete left a bundle for you in which are your nightgowns and other things you may need. You will

find it on the shelf in the closet. I must attend to the goats now, so, good-night."

"Good-night, grandfather! Good-night! What are their names, grandfather? what are their names?" cried Heidi, running after the old man as he disappeared round the corner with his goats.

"The white one is called Swanli and the brown one, Bearli," her grandfather called back to her.

"Good-night, Swanli! Good-night, Bearli!" shouted the child at the top of her voice, for the last goat was just vanishing within the stable. Then she sat down on the bench to eat her supper of bread and milk; but the wind was so strong that it nearly blew her from her seat, and so she hurried her meal, that she might get into the house and up to her bed, in which she was soon sleeping as soundly and sweetly as any one could sleep in the most princely of beds.

Very soon afterward, before it was quite dark, her grandfather also went to bed, for he was always up with the sun, and that rose very early from behind the mountains during these summer days. Later in the night the wind grew so strong that with every fierce gust the hut shook, and all the beams creaked and groaned; in the chimney wild voices seemed to cry and moan, and outside, the old pines were swaying back and forth so furiously that now and then a branch fell crashing to

the ground. In the middle of the night the old man arose, muttering to himself:—"The child may be afraid."

Mounting the ladder he stepped to Heidi's bed. For a moment the moon came out from behind the clouds, then disappeared again, and all was dark. But soon its beams fell through the round loophole and lay on the child's bed. She was sleeping so warm and comfortably under her heavy coverlet that her cheeks were rosy-red, and she must have been dreaming of something pleasant, for there was a happy smile on the little face as it rested on one chubby arm.

The old man stood looking at the peaceful little sleeper as long as the moon shone through the loophole; when it vanished behind a cloud, he returned to his bed.

CHAPTER III

THE GOAT PASTURE

EARLY the next morning Heidi was awakened by a shrill whistle, and on opening her eyes saw the yellow sunlight shining through the loophole, full on her bed and on the hay beside it, turning it all to shimmering gold. Heidi looked about her in surprise, and wondered where she was.

But soon she heard her grandfather's deep voice outside, and then it all came back to her—where she had come from, and that now she was to live with him up on the Alm, and not with old Ursel who was almost as deaf as a post, and always felt chilly. That was why she liked best to sit by the kitchen hearth, or beside the stove in the other room, and, as she could not hear Heidi and therefore liked to keep her in sight, the child had to stay there too, although often the little room stifled her and she longed to be out doors. And so Heidi was very glad when she awoke in her new home and thought of everything—all the new things she had seen yesterday, and what she would see again to-day, especially Swanli and Bearli.

So Heidi jumped quickly out of bed and was

soon dressed in all she had taken off the night before, which was very little. Then she climbed down the ladder and ran out through the open door. There stood Peter with his goats, and her grandfather was just opening the stable door to let Swanli and Bearli out to join the others. Heidi ran toward the old man to say good-morning to him and the goats.

"Would you like to go with them up to the pasture?" he asked. There was nothing that Heidi would have liked better, and she danced up and down for joy at the very thought.

"But first you must wash yourself, and be tidy, else the sun, that is always so shiny and bright up yonder, will laugh to see you look so black. See, everything is ready for you over there," said her grandfather as he pointed to a large tub full of water standing in the sunshine before the door.

Heidi ran to it and splashed and rubbed until she was so clean that she shone. Meanwhile her grandfather went into the hut and called to Peter:—

"Come here, commander of goats, and bring your haversack with you."

In great surprise Peter followed him into the house and held out the little bag in which he carried his meagre dinner.

"Open it," was the old man's next order; then

he put into it a huge slice of bread and an equally large piece of cheese. Peter looked on in round-eyed wonder, for the two pieces were each half again as large as those which had been put in for his dinner.

"There; now the bowl must go in," said the grandfather, "for the child cannot drink as you do, right from the goats themselves; she doesn't know how. You are to fill the bowl twice for her dinner, for she is going with you and will stay until you come back. Take good care of her, and don't let her fall over the cliffs; do you hear?"

Heidi now came running up.

"Will the sun find anything to laugh at now, grandfather?" she asked anxiously. In her fear of the sun's laughter she had rubbed her face, neck and arms so vigorously with the coarse towel that her grandfather had hung beside the tub, that she now stood before him as red as a lobster. The old man smiled as he looked at her.

"No, he'll find nothing to laugh at now. But I will tell you something; this evening, when you get home, you must jump into the water all over, just like a fish, for little folks that run about with the goats get black feet just like them. Now you can all be off."

Away they went, up the mountain, as merry as could be. The wind that had blown so hard all

night had not left a cloud in the sky. From the deep blue overhead, the glorious sun poured its warmth and light down the mountain side until all the blue and yellow flowers opened wide their cups and smiled back at it in gratitude. Heidi ran hither and thither, shouting for joy; for here were whole troops of delicate, pink primroses, and beyond them the ground was blue with gentians, while everywhere was nodding yellow rockroses dancing in the golden sunshine. So delighted was Heidi with all these nodding and shining blossoms that she quite forgot the goats, and even Peter himself. She ran far ahead, and then off to one side, for here she saw a sheen of red, and yonder a glimmer of yellow which she could not resist. And wherever she went she gathered great bunches of the gay blossoms and stowed them away in her apron, for she meant to take them home with her and set them all round in the hay up in her loft so that her sleeping-room might be as beautiful as it was here.

Poor Peter had to look in every direction at once to-day, and those round eyes of his, that were never very quick, had more to do than they could well manage, for the goats followed Heidi's example. They ran hither and thither, and he had to whistle and call and swing his long stick to get all the truants into line again.

"Where have you gone now, Heidi?" he shouted rather angrily.

"Here," came the answer from somewhere out of sight, for Heidi was sitting on the ground behind a little knoll that was quite covered with blossoming prunelles. The air was filled with their sweet odor and as Heidi sat among the flowers drinking in their perfume in deep breaths, she thought she had never before smelled anything half so delightful.

"Come on," cried Peter again. "Remember, you are not to fall down over the cliffs; your grandfather forbade it."

"Where are the cliffs?" asked Heidi without, however, showing any intention of rising, for the sweet fragrance of the flowers seemed more delicious to her with every breath she drew.

"Up yonder, away up yonder. But we have still a long way before us, so come on. Up there on the highest cliff of all sits the old eagle and screams."

That brought Heidi to her feet, and she ran after Peter as fast as she could, with her apron full of flowers.

"You have enough now," said he as the two were again clambering upward together; "else you'll be stopping all along the way, and besides, if you take them all to-day there'll be none left for to-morrow."

The last reason appealed to Heidi. Moreover, her apron was already so full of flowers there was little room for more, and to-morrow she would come again to see them. So she trudged along at Peter's side; and the goats, too, were more tractable, for they sniffed from afar the tempting fragrance of the herbs that awaited them on the upper pastures, and so climbed on without delay.

The grazing place where Peter usually made a halt with his goats, and set up his quarters for the day, lay at the foot of great cliffs whose base was green with bushes and scrub-pines, but whose jagged peaks towered bare and bleak into the heavens. On one side the pasture lands fell away in sheer precipices to the valley below, and the grandfather's warning with regard to them was not without reason.

When Peter reached this place he laid aside his bag and stowed it carefully away in a little hollow where the wind, which often came in rude and sudden gusts up here, could not carry it off; for he had no wish to see his precious bag go rolling down the mountain. Then he stretched himself out on the warm and sunny ground, for he felt the need of rest after the morning's climb.

Meanwhile Heidi had untied her apron and, with all the flowers it contained, rolled it into a neat, tight little bundle, and tucked it away for

safekeeping next the lunch bag. Then she sat down beside the prostrate Peter and looked about her. Far below lay the valley bathed in the glorious morning sunshine; opposite her a great, wide snow-field stretched upward, rising higher and higher until it seemed to touch the dark blue sky beyond; to the left of it towered a gigantic mass of rocks, on either side of which stood a great rocky pillar whose bare and jagged peaks pierced the blue above, and seemed to Heidi to be looking down at her, gravely and solemnly. The child sat as still as a mouse, gazing about her; there was a deep silence all around, only the wind whispered very gently among the shimmering rockroses and delicate bluebells that everywhere nodded gaily on their slender stems. Peter had fallen asleep after his exertions, and the goats were climbing about among the bushes farther up. As she drank in the golden sunshine, the pure fresh air and the delicate perfume of the flowers, she wished for nothing better than to stay where she was forever, for she had never been so happy in all her life before.

In this way a long time passed and Heidi looked so long and steadily at the high mountain peaks, that at length they seemed all to have faces and to be looking back at her like good old friends.

Suddenly she heard loud, shrill cries above her in the air, and looking up beheld the largest bird

she had ever seen, poised above her on wide outstretched wings; then it soared about in great circles, returning again and again to a point just over her head.

"Peter, Peter, wake up!" cried Heidi as loud as she could. "See, the eagle has come! See, there, there!"

Peter roused himself at her cry of alarm, and the two children watched the bird as it rose higher and higher into the blue dome above and finally vanished behind the gray cliffs.

"Where has he gone?" asked Heidi, whose eyes had followed the bird with the deepest interest.

"Home, to his nest," was Peter's answer.

"Is his home away up yonder? Oh, how lovely to live so high up. Why does he scream so?" Heidi continued her questioning.

"Because he must," was Peter's explanation.

"Let us climb up there and see where he lives," proposed Heidi.

"Oh, oh, oh," Peter broke forth, each exclamation marked by a tone of greater disapproval. "Why even the goats can't get up there, and your grandfather said you were not to fall over the cliffs."

And now Peter set up such a tremendous shouting and whistling that Heidi wondered what was going to happen. But the goats must have un-



She wished for nothing better than to stay where she was forever.

derstood it well enough, for they came jumping and running down the mountain side, one after the other, until the whole flock was assembled on the green pasture, some nibbling away at the juicy stalks, others skipping hither and thither, while still others tried their horns on one another in playful combat.

Heidi had jumped to her feet and was soon in the midst of them, for to her it was a new and highly amusing sight to see the little creatures skip about and carry on their merry antics. She ran from one to the other, getting personally acquainted with each in turn, for no two were alike, each one having its own peculiar appearance and ways.

Meanwhile Peter had fetched his bag and taken out the two slices of bread and two pieces of cheese, and laid them in a neat square on the grass, the two large pieces on Heidi's side, the small ones on his own; for he knew very well to whom each one belonged. Then taking the bowl, he milked it full of sweet, fresh milk from Swanli, and set it in the middle of the square. Then he called Heidi, but she did not obey his call as promptly as had the goats, for she was so delighted and amused by the varied antics of her new playfellows that she could see and hear nothing else.

But Peter knew how to make himself heard; he

shouted until the cliffs resounded, and presently Heidi appeared and was so pleased with the inviting looking table that she glanced up and down with glee.

"Stop your jumping; it is time to eat," said Peter. "Sit down, and begin."

Heidi sat down.

"Is the milk for me?" she asked with another glance of undisguised admiration at the beautiful square with its central point of interest.

"Yes," answered Peter; "and the two big pieces are yours too; and when you have emptied your bowl, I am to fill it again for you from Swanli, and then it will be my turn."

"And from which goat will you get your milk?" Heidi now wanted to know.

"From my own goat, Snaili. Now do begin to eat," urged Peter again.

Heidi began with the milk, and no sooner had she set down the empty bowl when Peter got up and filled it a second time. In the meantime Heidi had broken off a part of her bread, and now handed Peter all that was left; and this was even yet a much larger slice than his own which, together with his cheese, was fast disappearing. Putting the whole of her large piece of cheese with the bread, she said:—

"You can have that; I have had enough."

Peter stared at her in speechless amazement, for never in his life had he been able to say as much and still have something to give away. He hesitated a moment, for he could not believe that Heidi was in earnest; but she did not withdraw her hand, and when Peter did not take what she offered, she laid it on his knee. Then he saw that she meant what she said, and seizing the welcome gift, he nodded his thanks and approval as he fell to upon the heartiest meal he had ever had in his whole career as goatherd. Meanwhile Heidi watched the goats.

"What are all their names, Peter?" she asked.

Now this was something that Peter knew very well, and perhaps it was easier for him to carry it in his head because there was little else there to crowd it out. So he began and, without hesitating once, named them all, one after the other, and pointed them out as he did so. Heidi gave the closest attention, and before long knew each goat from its fellows, and could call it by name; for every one had its own peculiarities, easily to be remembered by anyone who looked at the little creatures carefully, and this Heidi did.

There was big Turk with his strong horns which he was always so ready to use against the others, so that most of them ran away at his approach, and would have nothing to do with their rough

comrade. The only one that never retreated before him was the valiant little Goldfinch, a slender, nimble fellow who often ran at him three or four times, one after the other, and with such speed and energy that the big Turk stopped short in astonishment and forgot to renew his attack; for there stood Goldfinch ready to return it with his sharp little horns.

Then there was little white Snowhopli, who was always bleating so plaintively that Heidi had to run to the little creature a number of times to try and comfort it by taking its head in her arms. Now again the child was at the little goat's side, for she could not resist the tender young voice. Putting her arms around the little animal's neck, she asked very sympathetically:—

"What is the matter, Snowhopli? Why are you always crying so pitifully?"

The goat nestled confidingly against the child and ceased complaining.

From his seat on the grass Peter called out in a voice somewhat choked at times, for he still had much to chew and swallow:—

"Snowhopli cries so because the old one doesn't come up with us any more; she was sold to some one in Mayenfeld day before yesterday, and since then she doesn't come to the pasture with us."

"Who is the old one?" called Heidi in return.

"Pooh! The mother, to be sure," was Peter's scornful reply.

"Where is the grandmother?" Heidi called again.

"Hasn't any."

"Where is the grandfather?"

"Hasn't any."

"Oh, you poor little Snowhopli," cried Heidi as she hugged the little creature close to her; "but you needn't cry any more, for I am coming up with you every day now, and then you will not be so lonely, and when something troubles you, you can run to me."

Snowhopli rubbed her head contentedly against Heidi's shoulder and did not bleat any more. Peter had finished his dinner by this time and now joined his flock and Heidi, who was again earnestly watching the goats.

Of all the flock the two prettiest and best kept by far, were Swanli and Bearli. They had a superior air, too, and kept to themselves most of the time, especially avoiding the big Turk, whom they treated with great scorn.

The goats were climbing upward again to the bushes they liked best, each one in his own peculiar way—some running on, heedless of everything; others prudently searching for all that was good along the way, while the big Turk tried his horns

on one or the other of his companions. Swanli and Bearli climbed gracefully and lightly, and were quick to find the best bushes, from which they then nibbled the leaves in a skilful and dainty fashion. With her hands clasped behind her, Heidi stood watching all this.

"Peter," said she to her companion, who was full length on the ground again, "Peter, the prettiest of them all are Swanli and Bearli."

"I know that well enough," was the reply; "the Alm-Uncle washes and brushes them, and gives them salt, and has the best stable."

Suddenly Peter sprang to his feet and ran leaping after the goats, Heidi following him at the top of her speed, for she knew that something must be happening and she did not want to lose it. Peter rushed on right through the flock toward that side of the pasture lands where they ended abruptly in a high and rocky precipice over which a heedless goat, in venturing too near the edge, might easily fall and break its bones. Toward this dangerous point Peter had seen the bold little Goldfinch running merrily, and the boy reached him none too soon, for the little fellow was just leaping toward the edge of the precipice. Peter was just about to seize him, when he tripped and fell to the ground, but managed to catch the animal's leg, to which he clung. Goldfinch did not

like to be held by the leg, and bleated loud with anger and surprise at this rude interruption of his merry little excursion while he struggled stubbornly to continue it. Peter screamed to Heidi to come and help him, for he could not get up, and was in danger of pulling the poor animal's leg off. Heidi was not far behind him, and instantly understood the peril that threatened. As quick as a flash she pulled a handful of tempting herbs and held them under the goat's nose, saying coaxingly:—

"Come, come, Goldfinch, you must be sensible. Don't you see that you might fall down there and break your leg, and that would hurt dreadfully."

The little creature turned at once and very contentedly began to nibble the herbs that the child held out to him. Meanwhile Peter had got on his feet again, and had slipped his hand through the cord that Goldfinch wore round his neck, and on which hung his little bell. Heidi caught hold of it from the other side, and in this way the two children led the little runaway back to where his companions were peacefully grazing.

When Peter had him safely back, he raised his long stick to punish him with a sound whipping, at which Goldfinch drew back timidly, for he knew what was coming. But Heidi cried out:—

"No, no, Peter! You must not strike him! See how frightened he is."

"He deserves it," snarled Peter angrily, and was just going to strike, when Heidi caught him by the arm and cried indignantly:—

"You shall not strike him; it will hurt him! Let him go!"

Peter looked with astonishment at the imperious little girl, whose black eyes flashed at him in a way that made him drop his stick involuntarily.

"Well then, he may go if you will give me some of your cheese again to-morrow," said Peter, yielding, but at the same time trying to get something to compensate him for the fright he had suffered.

"You may have it all—the whole piece—to-morrow and every day; I do not need it," was Heidi's ready assent. "And I will give you some of my bread, too; a piece as big as the one to-day; but then you must promise never to strike Goldfinch, never; nor Snowhopli, nor any of the goats."

"It's all one to me," was the reply, which was Peter's way of giving his promise. Then he let the little culprit go, and away went Goldfinch, leaping back to the flock with many a merry caper.

Thus the day slipped by unnoticed, and already the sun was nearing the tops of the western mountains. Heidi was sitting very quietly on the ground looking at the bluebells and tender rock-roses glistening in the golden evening sunshine; even the grass had caught the golden light, and the



"You shall not strike him; it will hurt him!"

cliffs above were beginning to gleam and glow, when suddenly the child sprang to her feet, crying:—

"Peter! See! The fire, the fire, Peter! All the mountains are in flames, and the big snowfield yonder is burning, and the sky! Oh, look, look! The great rocks are all red! Oh, the beautiful burning snow! Peter, get up! See, the fire has reached the eagle's nest! Oh, do look at the rocks! Look at the pine trees! Everything, everything is on fire!"

"It is always so," said Peter quite unmoved as he whittled away at his stick; "but it's no fire."

"What is it, then?" asked Heidi eagerly, and ran hither and thither to look in every direction, for she could not see enough, it was so beautiful on every side.

"What is it, Peter? What is it?" she asked again.

"Oh, it just comes so of itself," was Peter's explanation.

"Oh, see, see!" cried Heidi in great excitement; "all the mountains are turning rosy-red! Look at the one with the snow, and that one with the high, pointed cliffs! What are their names, Peter? What are their names?"

"Mountains have no names," was the reply.

"Oh, how beautiful! Look at the pink snow!

And oh, see all the many, many roses up yonder on the rocks! Oh, now they are turning gray! Oh, oh! Now it is all fading out! Now it is all gone, Peter!" And Heidi sat down on the grass looking as disconsolate as though the world were coming to an end.

"To-morrow it will be so again," said Peter. "Come, get up; we must go home now."

The boy shouted and whistled for his goats, and then the whole company started homeward.

"Will it be so every day, every day that we come up here?" asked Heidi in eager hope of an assuring answer as she trudged along at Peter's side.

"Usually," was the answer.

"But to-morrow? Are you sure it will be so to-morrow?" she wanted to know.

"Yes, yes; to-morrow, of course!" Peter assured her, whereupon Heidi's good spirits returned.

But she had seen so much that was new, and had so many things to think about, that she was quite silent all the way down to her grandfather's hut. There they saw the old man sitting under the pine trees where he had set a bench so that it faced the side of the mountain down which the goats usually came. Heidi ran toward him, with Swanli and Bearli close behind her, for the goats knew their master and their stable well.

As Peter went on with his goats he called back

to Heidi, "Good-night! Come again to-morrow;" for he had good reason for wanting her to go again.

Heidi ran after him and gave him her hand in assurance that she would certainly go with him in the morning. Then she darted into the midst of the departing flock and throwing her arms around Snowhopli's neck, said tenderly:—

"Sleep well, Snowhopli, and remember that I am going with you to-morrow, and that you must never bleat so sadly again."

Snowhopli looked gratefully at the little girl, and then ran merrily after the other goats.

Heidi ran back to her grandfather, and could not wait until she had reached him to call out:—

"Oh, grandfather, it was so beautiful! The fire, and the roses on the rocks, and all the blue and yellow flowers! And see what I have brought you!" whereupon she undid her tightly-folded apron and emptied her whole store of flowers on the ground at her grandfather's feet.

But how the poor little things looked! Heidi hardly recognized them, for they were as dry as hay, and not one little cup was open.

"Oh, grandfather! What ails them?" cried Heidi, very much shocked. "They weren't so when I picked them. What makes them look so now?"

"They were made to live out in the sunshine, and not to be folded up in a little girl's apron," said her grandfather.

"Oh, what a pity! I will never bring any more home with me. But grandfather, why does the eagle scream so?" was Heidi's next eager question.

"Now you must get into the tub while I go to the stable to get some milk, and then we will go in and have our supper, and while we are eating I will tell you."

When all had been done as her grandfather had said, and Heidi was sitting on her high stool beside him, with her bowl of milk before her, she remembered her question and promptly asked: "Why does the eagle scream so and cry down at us, grandfather?"

"He jeers at the people down below here because they live crowded together in villages and vex one another. So he cries out at them scornfully: 'If you would leave one another, and each one go his own way and live high up on a mountain top, as I do, you would be happier!' "

Her grandfather said this in so loud and fierce a tone that Heidi seemed to hear the eagle's wild scream once more.

"Why do the mountains have no names, grandfather?" was her next question.

"They have names," was the reply; "and if you

will describe one so that I can recognize it, I will tell you what it is called."

Heidi now described the rocky peak with the towering cliffs on either side, at which her grandfather nodded approvingly, and said:—

"I know that one; its name is Falkniss. Did you see any other?"

Hereupon Heidi described the mountain with the great snow-field that had suddenly glowed like fire, then turned rosy-red, and at last had grown pale and gray.

"I recognize that one, too," said her grandfather; "it is Cäsaplana. So you like to go up to the pasture, do you?"

Heidi now told him all that had happened during the day—how beautiful it had been, especially the fire in the evening, and she wanted her grandfather to tell her where it had come from, for Peter had not known.

"It is the sun who does that," explained her grandfather. "You see, when he says good-night to the mountains he sends them his brightest rays to remember him by until he comes again in the morning."

This pleased Heidi, and she could hardly wait for the coming of another day on which she could go up to the pasture and see the sun as it said good-night to the mountains. But first she had to

go to sleep; and sleep she did, most soundly, the whole night long on her bed of hay, while she dreamed of many shining mountains with red roses on them, and in the midst of them Snowhopli ran and played merrily.

CHAPTER IV

WITH THE GRANDMOTHER

THE next morning the bright sun rose again, and soon after it came Peter with his goats, and then the little company climbed up to the pasture again. So the days passed; and with all this out-door life Heidi grew browner than ever, and so well and strong that she never had an ache or a pain, but lived as blithely and happily day after day as did the merry birds in the green tree-tops.

But when autumn came, and the wind swept over the mountains in loud blasts, her grandfather sometimes said:—

"To-day you must stay at home, Heidi, for one of these strong gusts of wind may easily blow a little thing like you off of the rocks and into the valley below."

When Peter heard this he looked very disconsolate, for he saw before him a day of misfortune. In the first place he was so lonely without Heidi now-a-days that he hardly knew what to do with himself when she did not go with him; then, too, he missed his sumptuous dinner, and the goats were so unruly on such days that he had twice the

usual trouble with them, for they also had become so used to Heidi's company that they would not go on without her, but ran off in every direction.

But Heidi was never unhappy, for there was always something to which she looked forward with pleasure. Best of all she liked to go with Peter and the goats up to the pasture where the flowers grew and the eagle screamed, and where, with so many goats, there was always something of interest happening. However, to watch her grandfather as he hammered and sawed, and made all sorts of useful things, was also very amusing; and, if it so happened that on one of her days at home her grandfather prepared the little round goat cheeses she admired so much, she was especially happy, for it was so interesting to see him at this remarkable task, as, with shirt sleeves rolled up, he stirred the big kettle.

But what gave Heidi most delight on these windy days was the rushing and roaring in the three old pine trees behind the hut. Thither she was always running, leaving all else, no matter what it might be; for there was nothing she loved so much as the deep, mysterious sound of the wind as it tossed the giant branches overhead. At such times Heidi would stand down below and listen, and listen, never getting weary of seeing and hearing the wonderful commotion far up in the old

trees as the wind swept through them in mighty gusts. The sun was not as hot now as it had been in the summer, and Heidi got out her stockings and shoes, and her little frock, too, for it was growing cooler and cooler with every day, and when she stood under the pine trees the wind blew her about as though she were only a thin little leaf herself. Nevertheless, she came again and again, for she could not feel content in the hut when she heard the wind in the old trees.

By and by it grew very cold, and Peter breathed on his finger-tips when he came early in the morning. But he did not come much longer, for one night the snow fell, and the next morning the pasture lands were all white, and not a green leaflet was to be seen far and wide; after that the goatherd came no more with his flock.

And now Heidi stood by the little window, for it had begun to snow again, and watched with growing wonder the dancing snowflakes as they fell thick and fast until the snow outside the window lay as high as the sill, and still it snowed; finally the little window could not be opened at all, and the house seemed all shut in. This seemed very amusing to Heidi, and she ran from one window to the other to see how far up the snow reached, and whether, in the end, it would not cover the whole hut so that her grandfather would have to light

the candle in the middle of the day. But it did not get as bad as that, and the next morning her grandfather took his shovel and went out doors—for it had stopped snowing—and cleared a space all around the hut. He piled the snow into great heaps so that here, there and everywhere rose little white mountains all around the hut.

And now all the doors and windows could be opened again, and it was well that they could; for in the afternoon while Heidi and her grandfather were sitting by the open fire, on their three-legged stools—for the old man had long ago made one for Heidi—they heard a sudden noise outside, and something struck against the wooden door-sill again and again. Then the door was opened from without, and there stood Goat-Peter; it had not been out of impertinence, however, that he kicked the door so rudely, but to free his boots of the snow which had quite covered them. In fact, Peter was white with snow from his head to his heels, for he had been obliged to force his way through high drifts, and the snow had clung to his clothes and frozen on them in the sharp air. But he would not turn back, for it was now eight days since he had seen Heidi, and he would not wait longer.

"Good-afternoon!" he said as he entered; then, going straight to the fire, he placed himself before

it and remained there without saying another word; but his beaming face told how glad he was to be there.

Heidi looked at him in wide-eyed wonder, for it was warm by the fire, and the snow all over him began to thaw and drip down, so that presently he looked like a small waterfall.

"Well, goat general, how are you?" said the grandfather. "Now that you have lost your regiment, you have to gnaw your pencil, eh?"

"Why does he have to gnaw his pencil, grandfather?" asked Heidi with her usual quick interest.

"In the winter time he goes to school," the grandfather explained, "where they learn to read and write, and that is very hard work at times; then it helps matters along a bit to gnaw one's pencil. Isn't that so, general?"

"Yes, that's so," replied Peter.

Now Heidi's interest was fully aroused and she asked Peter many questions about the school—what was done there, and what to be seen and heard; and, since any conversation in which Peter took part required considerable time, he had ample opportunity to get nice and dry. He always found it hard to put his ideas into words, but to-day he had more than usual to contend with, for hardly had he found the words for one answer before Heidi had hurled two or three new ones at

him, and mostly such as required a whole sentence in reply.

The old man took no part in the children's conversation, but a merry twinkle in his eye and an occasional twitching of his lips showed that he was listening.

"Well, general, now you have been under fire and will need refreshment, eh? Come, take supper with us."

So saying the old man rose and got the evening meal out of the closet, while Heidi set the chairs around the table. Against one wall stood a new bench which the grandfather had made and fastened there. Now that he was no longer alone he had arranged all sorts of seats around the room, and all of them with place for two; for Heidi had a way of keeping near her grandfather wherever he walked or stood or sat. So there were seats enough for all; and Peter's round eyes grew rounder still when he saw what a big piece of fine smoked meat the Alm-Uncle put on the thick slice of bread he handed him. The boy had not fared so well for a long time. Hardly was the pleasant meal over when it began to grow dark, and Peter had to start for home. When he had said "Good-night" and "God bless you," and was already at the open door, he turned back to say:—

"Next Sunday I am coming again—a week

from to-day; and grandmother says you must come to see her some time."

Now this was an entirely new idea for Heidi, that she should visit some one; but it took root at once, and on the very next morning her first words were:—

"Grandfather, now I must go to see Peter's grandmother; she expects me."

"The snow is too deep," was her grandfather's evasive answer. But Heidi did not give up the idea, for the grandmother had asked for her, and so of course she must go. After that not a day passed on which she did not say five or six times:—

"Grandfather, to-day I ought surely to go, for the grandmother is waiting for me."

On the fourth day it was so cold that out of doors everything creaked and cracked underfoot, and there was a thick, firm crust on the snow; but the bright sun shone into the window and right on Heidi's chair as she sat at dinner. Hardly had she finished when she began her little speech again:—

"Surely, to-day I must go to see the grandmother, for she will get tired of waiting."

Her grandfather rose from the table, and climbing up to the loft soon came back with the heavy sack that served as Heidi's coverlet.

"Well, come on," said he, to Heidi's great joy. Hopping and skipping with glee she followed him

into the shining white world without. The old pine trees were very still now, for their branches were heavy with snow, and as the sun shone on them, they glistened and sparkled so wonderfully that Heidi danced about with delight, crying over and over again:—

"Come out, grandfather! Come out! The pine trees are all silver and gold!"

Her grandfather had gone into the shed, and now came out dragging a wide sled after him. It had an upright bar of wood fastened to one side of it, and the seat was so low that in sitting on it, the feet could be struck into the snow and so used to guide the sled in its downward course.

After Heidi had taken her grandfather all around the pine trees to admire them from every side, the old man seated himself on the sled; taking the child in his lap, and wrapping her up in the heavy sack to keep her snug and warm, he put his left arm round her to hold her close to him, which was a very necessary precaution in the ride before them; then he grasped the upright bar with his right hand, and gave a quick push with both feet. Away they went, speeding so swiftly down the mountain side that Heidi felt as though she were flying through the air like a bird, and shouted with glee.

Suddenly the sled stood still, and there they



Heidi felt as though she were flying through the air like a bird.

were, just in front of Goat-Peter's home. Her grandfather set the little girl on her feet and unwinding the sack from around her, said:—

"There, now run in; and when it begins to grow dark, come out and start for home."

Then, dragging his sled after him, he climbed back up the mountain.

Upon opening the door Heidi found herself in a tiny room where it was very dark; there was a hearth to be seen, and over it a shelf on which stood a row of dishes, so this must be the kitchen. There was a door opposite, which Heidi opened and entered another small and narrow room, for this was not a mountain herdsman's hut, with one large room below and a loft above, like her grandfather's, but a very old little house where everything was cramped and narrow and dingy. Upon stepping into the room Heidi was close beside a table at which sat a woman mending Peter's blouse, which Heidi recognized at once. At a spinning wheel in one corner of the room sat a bent little old woman. Heidi did not need to be told who this was, but walking straight up to her, said:—

"Good-afternoon, grandmother! Here I am. Did you think I was a long time coming?"

The grandmother raised her head and sought the hand that was held out to her. When she had

found it, she held it for a moment, passed her fingers over it thoughtfully, and then said:—

"Are you the child who is staying with the Alm-Uncle? Are you little Heidi?"

"Yes, yes," was the child's answer; "grandfather has just brought me down on his sled."

"Is it possible? And your hands so warm? Say, Brigitte, did the Alm-Uncle really bring the child down?"

Peter's mother, Brigitte—for it was she who was sitting at the table mending—now arose, and after looking the little girl over from head to foot with much curiosity, said:—

"I do not know, mother, whether the Alm-Uncle himself came down with the child or not; it is hardly possible, however; the child may not know exactly."

But Heidi's eyes looked straight into Brigitte's, and not in the least as though she were in doubt, as she said:—

"I know very well who wrapped me up in the warm coverlet and brought me down on the sled; it was my grandfather."

"Then there must be some truth after all in what Peter told us about the Alm-Uncle last summer, when we thought he was mistaken," said the grandmother. "But who would have believed it! I thought the child would not live three weeks up there. How does she look, Brigitte?"

Brigitte had been examining the child so curiously from every side that she was well prepared to answer her mother's question.

"She is slenderly built, like her mother, Adelheid," she replied; "but she has black eyes and curly hair like Tobias and like the old man up yonder. I think she looks like both of them."

During this conversation Heidi was not idle; she had looked all around the room and noticed everything. Now she said:—

"See, grandmother! There is a shutter swinging back and forth over there. If grandfather were here he would drive in a nail so that it could be fastened back. If it slams so it may break a pane of glass. See, now!"

"Oh, you dear child!" said the grandmother, "I cannot see it, but I can hear it only too well, and not the shutter only! When the wind blows, everything creaks and rattles; and it comes in through the cracks, too, for nothing is tight and fast in the old house, and at night, when the others are asleep, I am often so anxious for fear it may come tumbling about our ears and kill us all. Alas! there is no one to patch up the old place a bit, for Peter doesn't know how."

"But why can't you see how the shutter swings, grandmother? There it goes again! See, right over there!" exclaimed Heidi, pointing to the shutter with her finger.

"Ah, child! I cannot see anything, not a thing; not the shutter nor anything else," said the old woman sadly.

"But if I go out and open all the shutters wide so that the light can come in, will you see then, grandmother?"

"No, no! not even then. No one can ever make it light for me again."

"But if you go out doors where everything is white with snow, there it must surely be light for you. Come, grandmother, come out with me, and let me show you."

With that Heidi took the old woman by the hand to draw her toward the door, for the child was beginning to feel terribly distressed because the grandmother could nowhere find the light.

"Let me stay where I am, you good child! It will always be dark for me; out in the snow, or anywhere else, no matter how much light there is, for it cannot enter my eyes."

"But in the summer time, grandmother, surely," urged Heidi, seeking still more anxiously for some happy way out of her trouble; "when the sun shines down so hot, and then says 'good-night' to the mountains so that they shine like fire, and all the little golden flowers glitter, then it will grow light for you again, surely."

"Ah, child! I shall never see them again, the

beautiful, glowing mountains, and the bright yellow flowers up yonder. It will never again be light for me on earth, never again!"

On hearing this, Heidi began to cry bitterly. In deep distress she sobbed out:—

"Who can make it light for you, then? Can no one? No one at all?"

It was now the grandmother's turn to comfort the child, but that was not so easily done. Heidi seldom cried, but when she once began, it took her a long time to master her grief. The grandmother tried in various ways to soothe her, for it went to the old woman's heart to hear the child sob so; at length she said:—

"Come, you good little Heidi, come here to me! I want to tell you something. To those who cannot see, a cheery word is very pleasant, and it is a great happiness to me to hear you talk. Come, sit down beside me, and tell me what you and your grandfather do up yonder. I used to know him well; but it has been many a year since I have heard anything about him except what Peter tells, and he never says much."

This gave Heidi a new idea. Quickly wiping away her tears, she said consolingly:—

"Just wait, grandmother; I will tell grandfather all about it, and then he will make it light for you again, I am sure. And he will not let the hut

fall to pieces, either. He can make everything right again, I know."

To this the old woman made no reply. Heidi then began to tell her in a very lively manner all about her life with her grandfather, and especially about her days up on the pasture; then how she and her grandfather spent the winter days together, and how he made all kinds of things out of wood—benches and chairs and nice cribs into which to put hay for Swanli and Bearli; and a fine new tub in which she would take her bath next summer, and a new little bowl for her milk, besides a number of spoons. As she went on she grew more and more eager to tell of all the beautiful things that her grandfather could make out of a piece of wood, and how much she liked to stand by and watch him, and how some day she meant to make such things herself.

To all this the grandmother listened very attentively, only exclaiming from time to time:—

"Do you hear that, Brigitte?" or "Did you hear what she said about the Alm-Uncle, daughter?"

Suddenly the story was interrupted by a loud noise at the door, and Peter came stamping into the room, but stopped short with his round eyes opened to an astonishing size as he caught sight of Heidi; when he heard her quick "Good-afternoon, Peter," his face broadened into the friendliest of grimaces.

"Is it possible that it is time for him to be home from school!" exclaimed the grandmother in great surprise. "It has been many a year since an afternoon has passed as quickly as has this one. Good-evening, Peterli! How did you get on with your reading?"

"Just the same," was Peter's reply.

"Dear me!" said his grandmother with a little sigh; "I thought perhaps there might be a change now that you will be twelve years old in February."

"Why should there be a change, grandmother?" asked Heidi with quick interest.

"I only meant that I had hoped he might after all learn it—learn to read, I mean," said the grandmother. "Somewhere on that shelf lies my old prayer-book in which there are many beautiful hymns that I have not heard for a long time, and I do not know them by heart any more; so I had hoped that Peterli would learn to read, and then, once in a while, he could read me a good hymn. But he cannot learn; it is too hard for him."

"I think we must have a light; it is getting quite dark," said Peter's mother, who had been busy with the mending of his blouse all the while. "For me, too, the afternoon has slipped by before I was aware of it."

When Heidi heard this she jumped up, and holding out her hand, said:—

"Good-night, grandmother! I must go home at once if it is getting dark."

After shaking hands with Peter and his mother, she went to the door. But the grandmother's anxious voice called after her:—

"Wait, Heidi! Wait! You must not go all alone. Peter will go with you; do you hear? And Peterli, take good care of the child; see that she doesn't fall; and don't let her stand still, else she will get chilled. Do you hear? And has she a good warm neckerchief round her?"

"I haven't any neckerchief; but I shall not be cold," Heidi called back as she slipped through the door, and then sped on so quickly that Peter could hardly keep up with her.

"Run after her, Brigitte, run!" cried the grandmother in alarm. "The child will be cold—to be out so at night! Here, take my kerchief, and run quickly!"

Brigitte did as she was told. But the children had taken only a few steps up the mountain when they saw the grandfather coming down, and with a few long strides he was beside them.

"That's right, Heidi; you have kept your word," said he, and wrapping the child in her heavy coverlet, he picked her up and went up the mountain. Brigitte was just in time to see him turn toward home with the child, wrapped in her warm blanket,

on his arm. Peter and his mother went back into the hut, and, in great surprise, Brigitte told what she had seen to the grandmother. She, too, was much astonished, and exclaimed over and over again:—

"God be praised that the old man is so good to her! God be praised and thanked! If he will only let her come again; for the child was such a joy to me! What a good heart she has, and how amusing her talk is!"

All through the evening the old woman was cheered by the thought of Heidi's visit, and exclaimed repeatedly:—

"If she only comes again! Then I shall again have something in this world to which I can look forward with pleasure."

Brigitte agreed with her mother in everything she said, and Peter also nodded his approval while, with a broad grin of satisfaction, he said:—

"I knew it."

Meanwhile Heidi, from within her coverlet, was talking to her grandfather just as fast as she could; but since her voice could hardly be heard through the eight thicknesses of linen, he could not understand a word. So he said:—

"Wait a bit, until we reach home, and then tell me."

As soon as they were in the hut, and her grand-

father had unwound the bag from around her, Heidi began:—

"Grandfather, to-morrow we must take the hammer and some big nails and mend the shutter down at the grandmother's, and drive nails in a good many other places; for everything creaks and rattles down there."

"Oh, indeed! We must, we must, eh? Who said so?"

"Oh, no one said so. I know it, though," replied Heidi. "Everything is going to pieces down there, and the grandmother is so afraid at night when she cannot sleep and it rattles so. Then she thinks: 'Now everything is going to come tumbling about our heads.' And oh, grandfather! nobody can make it light for the grandmother! She doesn't know how it could be done; but you can do it, grandfather, can't you? Just think how sad it is that she is always in the dark, and then gets frightened besides! And nobody can help her, but you. To-morrow we will go down and help her; we will, grandfather, won't we?"

Heidi was clinging to her grandfather and looking up to him with unquestioning faith. The old man looked down at the child for a moment, and then said:—

"Yes, Heidi; we will stop the rattling down at

the grandmother's. So much we can do, and to-morrow it shall be done."

Heidi was so delighted that she danced about the room, crying:—

"To-morrow it shall be done! To-morrow it shall be done!"

Her grandfather was as good as his word. On the following afternoon the sled carried them down the mountain again, and, as on the day before, the old man set the child down in front of Goat-Peter's house and said: "Now run in, and when it grows dark come out here." Then he laid the bag on the sled and disappeared with it around the corner of the house.

Hardly had Heidi opened the door and run into the room, when the grandmother called out from her corner: "That must be the child! Here comes the child!" And so pleased was she that she dropped her thread and stopped her wheel to hold out both hands to her little friend.

Heidi ran to her, and drawing up a little stool sat down beside her and at once found much to tell her and many questions to ask. But suddenly they heard the sound of heavy blows against the house, which so frightened the grandmother that she started up from her spinning wheel and nearly upset it, as she cried out in a trembling voice:—

"Oh dear, oh dear! Here it comes! Everything is coming down on us!"

But Heidi caught her by the arm and said soothingly:—

"No, no, grandmother; don't be afraid; it is only grandfather with his hammer. He is making everything fast and tight, so that you will not be frightened any more."

"Oh, is it possible! Is even that possible! Then the dear Lord has not forgotten us after all!" cried the grandmother. "Did you hear, Brigitte? Did you hear what it is? It is, indeed, a hammer! Go out, Brigitte, and if it is the Alm-Uncle, ask him to step in a moment, so that I may thank him myself."

Brigitte went out and found the Alm-Uncle driving new clamps into the wall with heavy blows. Stepping up to him, she said:—

"I wish you a very good evening, Uncle, and so does mother; and we want to thank you for the trouble you are taking for us; and mother would be glad if you would step in, that she may tell you so herself. Indeed, it is not every one who would do as much for us, and we will remember it, for surely"—

"Cut it short," interrupted the old man. "What you think of the Alm-Uncle I know well enough. You may as well go back into the house. I can find what needs to be done myself."

Brigitte went in at once, for the Alm-Uncle had

a way that made it seem pleasanter to obey than to disobey him. All the afternoon he hammered and mended away at the little house, even climbing up the narrow stairs that brought him under the roof, where he kept hammering until he had used his very last nail. In the meantime it had begun to grow dark, and he had scarcely had time to climb down and go after the sled which he had put behind the goat-stable, when the door opened and out came Heidi. As on the previous day, her grandfather bundled her up well and carried her up the mountain, dragging his sled after him; for he knew well enough that if she sat alone on the sled, her warm wrap would not stay around her and she would be in danger of freezing.

And so the winter passed. After many years of darkness, in which the long days had been spent one like the other, a ray of gladness had come to brighten the joyless life of the blind old grandmother; for now she always had something to look forward to with pleasure. From early morning she listened for the child's tripping footstep, and when the door opened, and Heidi really came skipping into the room, she never failed to call out joyfully:—

"Praise God! Here she comes again!"

Then Heidi would sit down beside her and talk to her so gaily about all she had seen and heard that

the grandmother grew quite light-hearted, and the hours passed so quickly that she never asked as she used to: "Brigitte, isn't the day nearly over?" But instead, whenever the door closed after Heidi, she would say: "What a short afternoon it has been! Didn't you find it so, Brigitte?" To which her daughter always replied: "Indeed I did; it seems to me as though we had just put away the dinner dishes."

Then the grandmother would add earnestly:—"I pray the dear Lord may keep the child in good health, and the Alm-Uncle well-disposed toward me. Does she look well, Brigitte?" And the answer was always: "Her cheeks are as round and red as an apple's."

Heidi had grown very fond of the old grandmother, too, and whenever she remembered that no one, not even her grandfather, could make it light for her poor old friend, a great sadness came over her; but then the grandmother would always tell her that she suffered least from her blindness when her little Heidi was at her side.

And so all through the winter not a bright day passed without bringing Heidi down on her sled, and since her grandfather always took his hammer and many more things with him, and often spent the whole afternoon mending the little house, the creaking and rattling soon stopped, and the

grandmother often said that many a long year had passed since she had slept as well as she did this winter, and that she would never forget the Alm-Uncle's kindness.

CHAPTER V

TWO VISITS AND WHAT CAME OF THEM

QUICKLY the winter passed, and more quickly still the happy summer season that followed; and now another winter was nearing its end. Heidi was as gay and happy as the birds of the air, and with each passing day was looking forward more eagerly to the approaching days of spring when the southwind would come sweeping through the pines and drive away the snow; when the warm sunshine would call forth the blue and yellow flowers, and bring again the beautiful pasture days that gave Heidi more joy than did anything else on earth.

The child was now in her eighth year and had learned much that is useful from her grandfather; she could care for the goats as well as any one, and Swanli and Bearli followed her like two faithful little dogs, and bleated loudly for joy when they but heard her voice.

Twice during this winter Peter had brought the Alm-Uncle a message from the school-master in Dörfli, saying that it was time that the child who lived with him be sent to school, for she was past the age for beginners and ought to have gone to

school the winter before. In reply the Uncle had sent word that the school-master would find him at home if he had anything to say to him, but that he did not intend to send the child to school. This message Peter had delivered correctly.

March had come and on all the sunny slopes the snow had melted; everywhere in the valley below, the little white snowdrops were peeping forth, and up on the Alm the three great pine trees had shaken off their snowy burden and were tossing their branches in the wind once more. Heidi was so happy that for sheer delight she ran from the hut to the goat-stable, and from there to the pine trees, and then back again to her grandfather in the hut to tell him how much larger the green spot under the trees had grown; a moment later she was back again under the trees to renew her observations, for she could hardly wait until everything should be green once more and the beautiful summer return to the mountain and clothe its slopes with grass and flowers.

One sunny March morning as Heidi was thus merrily running hither and thither, and was bounding out of the door for about the tenth time, she nearly fell backward into the room from fright, for just outside stood an old gentleman all in black, looking down at her very earnestly. When he saw how frightened she was, he said kindly:—

"You need not be afraid of me, little girl, for I love children. Come, shake hands with me. You are Heidi, I suppose; now where is your grandfather?"

"He is at his bench carving round spoons out of a piece of wood," replied Heidi, opening the door for him.

It was the good old pastor from Dörfli who had once known the Alm-Uncle well, for he had been his neighbor in the years before he left his home. He stepped into the hut and going toward the old man who was bending over his carving, said:—

"Good-morning, neighbor!"

The Alm-Uncle looked up in surprise, and, rising, said:—

"Good-morning to you, Herr Pastor!" Then pushing his chair toward his visitor he added: "If the Herr Pastor does not object to a wooden seat he is welcome to this one."

When he had seated himself, the pastor said:—

"It is a long time since last I saw you, neighbor."

"It is quite as long since I have seen the Herr Pastor," was the reply.

"I have come to-day to speak to you about something," the pastor began again. "I have no doubt you know what it is that has brought me, and I would like to hear what you intend to do with regard to it."

Here the good man stopped and glanced at the child who was standing in the doorway looking at the newcomer with great interest.

"Heidi, go and look after the goats. You may take a little salt with you and stay with them until I come."

Heidi went at once.

"The child might have gone to school a year ago, and certainly should have been sent this winter," said the pastor now. "The school-master called your attention to this some time ago, but you have not heeded his warning. What do you mean to do with the child, neighbor?"

"I do not mean to send her to school," was the reply.

The Herr Pastor gave a glance of surprise at the old man sitting on his bench with folded arms, and looking far from submissive.

"What do you intend to make of her?"

"Nothing; she grows and thrives up here with the goats and the birds. She is happy with them, and they teach her no evil."

"But the child is neither a goat nor a bird, but a human being; and if she learns no evil from these companions, neither does she learn anything useful. But she ought to learn something, and it is time that she began. I came to remind you of this in time, neighbor, so that you may think it

over during the coming summer, and make your plans. This is the last year in which the child can go entirely without instruction. Next winter she must be sent to school, and regularly."

"I'll not do it, Herr Pastor," said the old man stubbornly.

"Do you really suppose, then, that there is no way of bringing you to your senses, if you persist in your unreasonable course?" asked the pastor with some irritation. "You have been about in the world and have seen much and might have learned much. I gave you credit for better sense, neighbor."

"Indeed!" replied the old man, and his voice showed that he, too, was not as calm as he had been. "And does the Herr Pastor really expect that next winter I will send so young a child on a two hours' journey down the mountain every cold and bitter morning, through storm and snow, to come back again in the evening when it is often hard enough for us men to fight our way through wind and snow? And a child like Heidi! Perhaps the Herr Pastor remembers her mother, Adelheid? She walked in her sleep, and had strange nervous attacks. Shall I let the child run the risk of getting a like trouble from exposure? Just let them try to force me to it! I will go into every court in the land with her, and then we shall see who can compel me."

"You are quite right, neighbor," said the pastor in a friendly tone; "it would not be possible to send the child to school from here. But since you are evidently fond of the little one, why will you not do for her sake what you should have done long ago? Come down into Dörfli, and live with your fellow-men again. What a life you lead up here, all alone, and at enmity with God and man! Should something happen to you up here, who would there be to do anything for you? And in the winter time I should think you would nearly freeze here in this hut; and how that delicate child can endure it, is more than I can understand."

"The child has fresh young blood, and a good warm coverlet, of that the Herr Pastor can be sure; and, moreover, I know where there is wood to be got, and if the Herr Pastor will look into my shed, he will not find it empty; in this hut the fire is never allowed to go out all winter long. What the Herr Pastor suggests about going down to Dörfli is not for me; the people down there despise me, and I them, so it is better we remain apart—better for them and better for me."

"No, no; it is not better for you; I know what troubles you," replied the pastor kindly. "And with regard to the Dörfli people's dislike of you, that is not as bad as you think. Take my advice, neighbor,—make your peace with God, ask Him

to forgive you for that which needs forgiveness, and then come down and see how differently the people will feel toward you, and how much happiness there is still in store for you."

The pastor arose, and holding out his hand to the old man said cordially:—

"I shall count on your coming down and being one of us again next winter, neighbor, and then we will be as good friends as we once were. It would grieve me to see force used against you. Now give me your hand on it, that you will come down and live among us again, at peace with God and man."

The old man gave his hand to the pastor, but said with unyielding determination:—

"I know the Herr Pastor means well by me, but I cannot do what he proposes. The child will not be sent to school, nor shall I go to live in the village. It is my final decision, and I shall not change my mind."

"Then God help you," said the pastor sadly, and turning, left the house and went down the mountain.

The Alm-Uncle was out of humor. When in the afternoon, Heidi asked, "Now shall we go down to the grandmother's?" he answered curtly, "Not to-day," and said not another word all day.

The next morning when Heidi asked, "Are we

going down to the grandmother's to-day?" he answered, "We'll see," in a tone as short as his words.

But before the dinner dishes had been set away another visitor opened the door. It was Aunt Dete. On her head was a fine hat with a feather, and she wore a dress that swept everything along with it as she walked, and on the floor of a herdsman's hut there is likely to be much that is not becoming to the skirt of a dress.

The Alm-Uncle looked at her from head to foot, but said nothing. But Aunt Dete meant that their conversation should be a very friendly one, and so began it with a word of praise, saying that Heidi looked so well that she hardly recognized her, and that it was evident that the child had not fared badly at her grandfather's. It had always been her intention, however, to relieve him of the little one's care, for she knew very well that a child must be in his way; but at the time she had brought her to him there had been no other way to dispose of her. Ever since then she had been trying to think of some way to provide for Heidi. Now she had suddenly heard of an opportunity that promised such good fortune for the child that she could hardly believe it possible, and it was this she had come to tell him; for she had followed the matter up at once, and now she could say that it was as

good as settled, and that Heidi's good luck was such as did not come to one child in a hundred thousand.

The family whom she served, Dete went on to say, had some very rich relatives whose home was about the handsomest in Frankfort; these people had an only daughter who was not well, and obliged to spend her days in a wheel chair because she was lame besides. The little girl had her lessons at home with a tutor and so was almost always alone; this she found very dull, and so she longed to have a playmate in the house with her.

Dete had heard this from the family with whom she lived, for they were kindly people, and anxious to find a companion for the sick girl, such an one as the lady who had charge of the house had described. The lady had said she wanted a child that was quite unspoiled, and original in its ways, not like the children that were to be found everywhere. And it was this, Dete continued, that had made her think of Heidi; she had therefore gone to see the housekeeper at once, and told her about the child and its original character, whereupon the lady had decided to take the child.

Now, no one could foresee all the good fortune which might come to Heidi; for when she was once with these people and they had grown fond of her, and something were to happen to the sick girl—

for no one could tell what might not happen to a sickly child—then the family would hardly care to be without any child, and in this way the most marvelous good luck might—

"Are you almost through?" interrupted the Alm-Uncle, who so far had not said a word.

"Pshaw!" retorted Dete with a toss of her head, "anyone would think I was telling you the most ordinary news, and yet there is not a person in all Prättigau who would not thank heaven for a message such as I am bringing you."

"Take your message to whom you will; I want none of it," said the Uncle curtly.

At this Dete flared up like a rocket. "Oh," she cried, "if that is what you think about it, you shall hear what is in my mind, too. The child is now eight years old, and knows nothing and can do nothing; yet you refuse to send her to school or to church, as I was told down in Dörfli. She is my only sister's child, and I am responsible for her; and when a child has an opportunity such as this, only a person who cares for no one and wishes no one well would stand in her way. But I'll not give up, I can assure you; and the people are all on my side; there isn't a person in Dörfli who will not help me against you. So I advise you to think twice before you go to court about it; there are other matters, too, that might be raked up, of

which you would be sorry to hear; for when one gets into court, many a thing is brought to light that might otherwise have been forgotten."

"Silence!" thundered the old man, his eyes flashing fire. "Take her and spoil her; but never come back here with her again! I never want to see her with a befeathered hat on her head or words in her mouth such as yours of to-day!"

With that the old man strode out of the hut.

"You have made grandfather angry," said Heidi, and her black eyes flashed up at her aunt in a way that was far from friendly.

"Oh, he will soon be all right again. Come on, now," urged her aunt. "Where are your clothes?"

"I'm not going," said Heidi.

"What's that?" cried Dete impatiently. Then, changing her tone somewhat, she continued half coaxingly, half angrily: "Come, come, child; you don't know what you are talking about. You're going to have the best time in the world."

Then she went to the closet and taking out Heidi's clothes, made a bundle of them.

"Come, now, get your hat yonder; it doesn't look very pretty, but it will do for this time. Put it on, and make haste, so that we can be off."

"I'm not going," Heidi said again.

"Don't be as stupid and stubborn as your goats; you must have learned it from them. Can't you

understand? Your grandfather is angry now; you heard him say that he never wants to see us again, so he wants you to go with me, and you must not make him more angry. You have no idea how beautiful it is in Frankfort, and how many new things you will see. And if you don't like it you can go home again; by that time your grandfather will not be cross any longer."

"Can I turn right round when I want to, and get home this evening?" asked Heidi.

"Oh, nonsense! Come on! Didn't you hear me say that you can go home when you like? To-day we are going as far as Mayenfeld, and to-morrow morning we'll take the train, and in that you can get back in a twinkling, for it goes so fast that it seems to fly along."

Aunt Dete had taken Heidi by the hand, and the bundle of clothes under her arm, and now the two were hurrying down the mountain.

Since it was too early in the season to take the goats to pasture, Peter was still going to the village school, or rather, should go, for he was much given to taking a holiday every once in a while. "For," thought he, "it is of little use to go to school, and reading is of small consequence anyway; to wander around a bit and cut long fagots is much more sensible, for they are of some use."

Just now he was coming home from one of these

expeditions which must have been very successful, for he carried a huge bundle of stout hazel fagots over one shoulder as he came in sight. As soon as he saw Heidi and her aunt he stopped short and stared at them until they were close beside him; then he asked:—

"Where are you going?"

"I'm just going to Frankfort for a little while with Aunt Dete," Heidi answered; "but first I will run in to see the grandmother a minute; she is expecting me."

"No, no, you can't do it; we are late as it is," said Dete, tightening her grasp on Heidi's hand, for the child was striving toward the door with all her might. "You can go there when you get back. Come on, now."

So saying Dete drew Heidi quickly along with her, never loosening her hold on her, for she feared that if the child once got into the house she might again make up her mind not to go along, and be upheld in it by the grandmother.

Bursting into the house Peter struck the table so violently with his bundle of fagots that everything in the little room trembled, and his grandmother started up from her spinning wheel with a cry of alarm. It was Peter's way of giving vent to his feelings.

"What is it? What is the matter?" the grand-

mother inquired anxiously, while his mother, who had been sitting by the table, almost flew into the air at the loud whack. But she only said with her usual patience:—

"What is the matter, Peterli? What makes you so furious?"

"Because she has taken Heidi away," was Peter's explanation.

"Who, who? Where, Peterli? Where?" asked his grandmother in fresh alarm. Remembering that her daughter had told her only a little while ago that she had seen Dete going up the mountain, she soon guessed what had taken place, and hurrying to the window she threw it open, and in a voice trembling with excitement cried beseechingly:—

"Dete, Dete, don't take the child away. Please don't take Heidi away from us!"

The two who were hurrying away so fast heard her voice, and, no doubt, Dete guessed what she was saying, for she held on to Heidi's hand still more tightly and ran as fast as she could. Heidi struggled to free herself while she cried:—

"Grandmother is calling me! I must go to her!"

But that was just what her aunt meant she should not do, and so tried to pacify her by telling her to hurry along now so that they would not be

too late to take the train in the morning; then she could see for herself how much she would like Frankfort—so much that she would never want to go away. But if she wished to go home after all, she could start right off, only stopping long enough to get something for the grandmother—something that she would like.

This prospect pleased Heidi; she stopped pulling back, and straightway began to run along with Dete.

"What can I bring the grandmother?" she asked after a while.

"Something good," said her aunt; "some nice soft white rolls. She will like them, for she can hardly bite the hard black bread."

"Yes, that's true, she always gives it to Peter, and says: 'It is too hard for me.' I have seen her do it myself," said Heidi. "Let us go quickly, Aunt Dete, then perhaps we can get to Frankfort to-day, and I can soon be home again with the rolls."

At this thought Heidi began to run so fast that her aunt, with her bundle under her arm, could scarcely keep up with her. But she was glad enough to hurry along so swiftly, for they were now among the first straggling houses of Dörfli, where there was danger of renewed questions and remarks that might suggest inconvenient thoughts

to Heidi. So she ran on without stopping anywhere, while Heidi kept a little ahead of her and tugged at her hand, so that it was plain to every one that Dete was obliged to hurry along on the child's account. To the many questions that were called out to her from the open doors and windows she had but one answer, saying: "You see I cannot stop, the child is in such a hurry, and we have still a long way before us."

"Are you taking her off? Is she running away from the Alm-Uncle? It's only to be wondered the child is still alive! And with such rosy cheeks, too!"

With these and like remarks Dete was greeted on every side, and she was thankful to get through without either hindrance or the necessity of further explanation; as also that Heidi said nothing, but only pressed forward with all speed.

From this day forth the Alm-Uncle looked more forbidding than ever when he came down to Dörfli or passed through on his way to the valley below, where he sold his cheeses and bought his provisions of bread and meat, for he would trade with no one in Dörfli. He spoke to no one in the village, and with his cheese basket on his back, a long stick in his hand, and his thick eyebrows drawn together in a frown, he looked so fierce that mothers warned their children against him, saying: "Be careful

to keep out of the Alm-Uncle's way, or he may hurt you."

After he had gone through Dörfli in this way the people stood in little groups wherever he had passed, and everyone had something to say about his appearance; that he looked fiercer than ever and did not so much as return a greeting now-a-days. They all agreed that the child was very lucky to have escaped from him, and that it had been plain to see how eager she was to get away, as though she feared the old man might follow her and carry her back.

Only the blind old grandmother stood by the Alm-Uncle; she always told everyone who came up to the house with wool to spin, or to get the finished yarn, how kind and careful he had been with the child, and how much he had done for her and her daughter; how many afternoons he had spent in mending the old house which, without his care, might have been a heap of rubbish by this time. And so it came about that rumors of this kind also reached Dörfli; but most people who heard them replied that the grandmother was probably too old to understand the matter rightly, and that, since she could not see, she very likely could not hear very well either.

But the Alm-Uncle never appeared at Goat-Peter's home now-a-days; and it was well that he

had mended the little house so thoroughly, for now it would last a long time without any further repairs.

To the blind old grandmother the days that she began with a sigh had come again, and never one passed on which she did not say mournfully:—

"Alas! the child has taken all our cheer and happiness with her; the days are so long and empty now! God grant I may hear Heidi's voice again before I die!"

CHAPTER VI

A NEW CHAPTER AND NEW SCENES

IN the house of Herr Sesemann in Frankfort his little invalid daughter, Klara, sat among her cushions in the comfortable reclining chair in which she spent her days and in which she was wheeled from one room to another. At present she was in the so-called study adjoining the large dining-room. In it were to be seen all the many things that make a room comfortable and cosey, showing that this was where the family spent most of the day. A large and handsome bookcase with glass doors told plainly how the room had come by its name, and also that this was probably where the little lame girl received her daily instruction.

The child had a thin, pale little face out of which looked a pair of gentle blue eyes that at the present moment were fixed on the face of the large clock whose hands seemed to move especially slowly to-day; for Klara, who was seldom impatient, now said in a tone that showed she was considerably so:—

"Isn't it time for them to be here yet, Fräulein Rottenmeier?"

The lady spoken to was sitting very erect at a little work table, embroidering. She wore a mysterious sort of wrap, a kind of cape or mantilla which gave her a majestic appearance that was heightened by a domelike structure which she wore on her head. For a number of years, ever since the death of Klara's mother, Fräulein Rottenmeier had been at the head of Herr Sesemann's establishment, directing the housekeeping and having entire charge of the servants. The master of the house was necessarily away from home a large part of the time, and left the whole care of it to Fräulein Rottenmeier, with the one stipulation that his little daughter should have a voice in all matters, and that nothing should be done in opposition to her wishes.

While Klara was impatiently asking Fräulein Rottenmeier for the second time whether it was not yet time for those whom she expected to arrive, Dete was standing at the front door holding Heidi by the hand and asking the coachman, Johann, who had just stepped down from the carriage, whether she might venture to disturb Fräulein Rottenmeier at this late hour.

"That's not my business," growled the coachman; "step into the hall and ring for Sebastian."

Dete did as she was told and Sebastian appeared; he had big round buttons on the coat of

his livery, and eyes that were nearly as big and round in his head.

"I would like to know whether I may venture to disturb Fräulein Rottenmeier at this hour," said Dete again.

"That's not my business," replied Sebastian; "ring for the maid, Tinette—that bell over there," and without offering any further information Sebastian disappeared.

Dete rang again, and at the head of the stairs appeared Tinette, wearing a little square of dazzlingly white muslin on her head, and a look of scorn on her face.

"What's wanted?" she asked, without leaving her place at the top of the stairs. Dete repeated her request, whereupon Tinette disappeared, but soon returned and called down: "You are expected."

Dete went up stairs holding Heidi by the hand, and followed Tinette into the study where she remained modestly standing by the door with Heidi's hand still held firmly in her own, for she did not know what the child might do in such wholly new surroundings.

Fräulein Rottenmeier rose slowly and came nearer to look at this newly arrived companion for the daughter of the house. What she saw did not seem to please her. Heidi wore her simple cotton frock, and on her head was a little straw hat which

was both old and crushed. But it was a very innocent little face that looked up from beneath it, as Heidi gazed with unconcealed wonder at the high structure on the lady's head.

"What is your name?" asked Fräulein Rottenmeier after she had scrutinized the child for some moments during which Heidi had not taken her eyes off of her.

"Heidi," said the child distinctly and in a pleasant voice.

"What? What? That surely can be no Christian name. You were not baptized so, were you? What is the name you were given in baptism?

"I don't remember that now," replied Heidi.

"What an answer!" exclaimed the lady with a disapproving shake of the head. "Dete, is the child simple, or is she pert?"

"Begging the lady's pardon, and with her permission, I will speak for the child, for she is very inexperienced," said Dete as she gave Heidi a sly cuff for her unseemly answer. "But she isn't simple, nor is she pert, for she has no idea of such a thing; she means no more than she says. This is the first time she has been in the house of gentle folks and she hasn't learned to be mannerly. But she is obedient and will learn quickly, if the lady is a little patient with her. She was baptized Adelheid, and named for her mother, who was my sister."

"Very well; that is a name that can be pronounced. But I must say, Dete, the child's appearance is peculiar for one of her age. I told you that the companion I desired for Fräulein Klara must be of her own age, so that she may receive the same instruction and share her occupations. Fräulein Klara has passed her twelfth year; how old is this child?"

"Begging the lady's pardon," Dete began again very glibly, "I was really mistaken about the child's age; she is a little younger than I had thought; but not much, I think. I cannot tell exactly, but she must be about ten years old, or more, I should judge."

"I am eight now; grandfather said so," declared Heidi, for which she got another cuff from her aunt; but as she had not the least idea what it was for, it did not embarrass her at all.

"What? Only eight years old?" exclaimed Fräulein Rottenmeier indignantly. "Four years too young. That will never do. And what have you learned? What books have you studied?"

"None," said Heidi.

"What? What's that? How then did you learn to read?" inquired the lady further.

"I did not learn, and neither did Peter," Heidi informed her.

"For pity's sake! You cannot read! You

really cannot read?" cried Fräulein Rottenmeier in great dismay. "Is it possible? But what have you learned, then?"

"Nothing," said Heidi, as the truth demanded.

"Dete," said Fräulein Rottenmeier after a short pause in which she tried to regain her composure, "in no way does this child fulfil our agreement. How could you bring the creature here?"

But Dete was not easily abashed, and she now answered boldly:—

"Begging the lady's pardon, I thought the child was just what was wanted; according to the description given me, she was to be original, different from other children, and so I had to take this little one, for with us the older children are like most others; and I thought this one answered the description as though made for the place. But now I must really go, for my mistress expects me. I will come again soon, if I may, to see how the child is doing," and dropping a courtesy, Dete was out of the door and down the stairs with all speed.

Fräulein Rottenmeier stood as though dazed for a moment and then ran after her. It probably occurred to her that if the child was really going to stay, there were many things that must be discussed with her aunt; for here the child was, and it was plain to see, Dete meant she should stay.

Heidi was still standing in the self-same place

by the door. So far Klara had remained a silent observer in her reclining chair, but now she beckoned Heidi and said:—

"Come here to me."

Heidi went to her at once.

"Would you rather be called Heidi or Adelheid?" asked Klara.

"Heidi is my only name; I haven't any other," was the child's answer.

"Then I will always call you so," said Klara; "I like the name for you, it just suits you. I have never heard it before; but then, neither have I ever seen a child like you before. Has your hair always been so short and curly?"

"Yes, I think so," said Heidi.

"Were you glad to come to Frankfort?" Klara continued her questioning.

"No, but to-morrow I am going home again with some white rolls for the grandmother."

"What a curious child you are!" was Klara's astonished exclamation. "Don't you know that you have been brought to Frankfort to stay with me, so that we can have our lessons together; and, don't you see, it will be great fun now, for you don't know how to read, and that will make the lessons different from any I have ever had. They are often so stupid, and sometimes it seems as though the morning will never end. For, you see,

the Herr Kandidat comes every morning at ten o'clock, and then the lessons begin and last until two, and that is a very long time. Many a day I have seen the Herr Kandidat draw his book close up to his face as though he had suddenly grown very short-sighted, but it is only to hide a great, big yawn; and Fräulein Rottenmeier, too, often takes out her large handkerchief, and buries her face in it, as though she were quite overcome by what we are reading, but I know she is only yawning frightfully behind it. And then I want to yawn, too, but I always swallow it down, for if I yawn only once, Fräulein Rottenmeier runs after the cod liver oil, because, she says, it must be that I feel weak. If there is anything dreadful, it is to take cod liver oil, and I would much rather smother a yawn. But now the lessons will be much pleasanter, for I can listen while you learn to read."

But Heidi shook her head very doubtfully at the thought of learning to read.

"Oh yes, Heidi; of course you must learn to read, everybody must. And the Herr Kandidat is very kind, too; he is never cross and is always willing to explain everything. But you see, Heidi, while he is explaining, you will not understand what he means at all, but you must wait and not say anything yourself, for that will only make

him explain still more, and then you will understand even less. But afterward, when you have learned all about it, then you will know just what he meant."

At this moment Fräulein Rottenmeier re-entered the room; she had failed to overtake Dete, and was evidently much agitated over it, for she had not been able to impress Dete sufficiently with all the particulars in which the child did not come up to her expectations. Moreover it had been at her own suggestion that the child had come, and now, that she could think of no way to undo this unfortunate step, her irritation grew with every moment.

From the study she went hastily into the dining-room, only to return to the study from which she hurried back into the dining-room again, where she came upon Sebastian standing by the table and casting his round eyes over it to see if he had forgotten anything.

"You can finish your great thoughts to-morrow; now it is time to get dinner on the table if we are to have any to-day," snapped Fräulein Rottenmeier, as she hurried past Sebastian to call Tinette in a tone so uninviting that this young person came mincing along with steps that were even shorter than usual, and as she stood before Fräulein Rottenmeier, her face wore such a scornful expression,

that the lady did not venture the ill-natured remark she had on her tongue, which only served to increase her irritation.

"The child's room must be made ready for her, Tinette," said Fräulein Rottenmeier, striving to regain her composure. "Everything is in order, but the furniture must be dusted."

"It is well worth the trouble," was Tinette's sarcastic remark as she turned to go.

Meanwhile Sebastian had thrown open the folding doors with no gentle hand, for he was very angry, but in Fräulein Rottenmeier's presence did not dare to give vent to his vexation in words. He now went very slowly into the study to wheel Klara's chair into the dining-room. He found the handle loose, and while he was adjusting it, Heidi placed herself before him and looked at him so intently that he could not fail to notice it.

"Well, what do you see that's so wonderful?" he snarled in a tone that he would hardly have used had he seen Fräulein Rottenmeier who was standing in the doorway. She entered the room just as Heidi replied:—

"You look just like Goat-Peter, Herr Sebastian."

In utter horror the housekeeper clasped her hands, and with a sigh of despair muttered:

"Is it possible! Now she is calling the serv-

ants 'HERR'![1] The creature lacks all sense of propriety."

Klara's chair was now wheeled into the dining-room and Sebastian placed his little mistress at the table. Fräulein Rottenmeier seated herself next to her, and motioned Heidi to take the chair opposite. The three were the only ones at dinner, and so there was ample space between them for Sebastian to offer his dishes on the tray. Next to each plate lay a beautiful white roll, and Heidi's eyes brightened at sight of hers. The resemblance to Peter which she had discovered in Sebastian must have won her entire confidence for she sat as still as a mouse, not daring to move, until he approached her to offer the big platter of fried fish; then, pointing to her roll, she asked:—

"May I have that?"

Sebastian nodded, at the same time casting a side glance at Fräulein Rottenmeier, for he wondered what effect Heidi's question would have on that lady. The child picked up her roll and put it quickly into her pocket. Sebastian bit his lip, for he wanted to laugh, but he knew that, no matter what the temptation, it would not be tolerated. Without uttering a word he remained standing at Heidi's place, platter in hand, for his orders did not allow him either to speak or to pass on until

[1] Mister.

Heidi had helped herself. The child looked up at him wonderingly for a moment, and then asked:—

"Am I to have some of that, too?"

Sebastian nodded again, whereupon Heidi said:—"Well, give me some then," and looked expectantly down at her plate. Sebastian bit his lip furiously and the tray in his hand shook in an alarming manner.

"You may set the fish on the table, and come back later," said Fräulein Rottenmeier severely.

Sebastian disappeared at once.

"I see, Adelheid, that I must teach you the very first principles of good behavior," began Fräulein Rottenmeier with a deep sigh, "and first of all I will show you how to conduct yourself at table."

Hereupon the housekeeper went through a dumb show of helping herself from dishes that were presented, so that Heidi might see just how it ought to be done. "And further," she continued, "you must not speak to Sebastian at meal time, in fact never, except to give him an order, or to ask a necessary question. And above all, you are not to call him *Herr;* say only Sebastian or you. Never let me hear you address him in any other way. Tinette you call simply Tinette, and you may address me as you hear the others do; how Klara wishes you to call her she will tell you herself."

"Klara, of course," said the little invalid.

Now followed a long lecture on good behavior—how to get up and how to go to bed, how to enter a room and how to leave it, about closing doors and good order in general—to all of which Heidi listened until she could keep her eyes open no longer; for she had risen that morning at five, and had made a long journey. With her head against the back of her chair she was soon sleeping soundly. When at length Fräulein Rottenmeier had finished her instructions she said:—

"Now remember what I have told you, Adelheid; do you think you understand it all?"

"Heidi has been fast asleep this long time," said Klara with a look of great amusement on her face; for it had been many a day since the dinner hour had been so entertaining.

"The vexation that I have to suffer on account of that child is beyond belief," exclaimed Fräulein Rottenmeier in deep indignation, and then rang the bell so violently that both Sebastian and Tinette came rushing into the room. In spite of all this noise, Heidi slept on, and it was only with great difficulty that she could be roused sufficiently to be conducted through the study, and past Klara's and Fräulein Rottenmeier's rooms to the corner chamber which was to be hers.

CHAPTER VII

THE HOUSEKEEPER HAS A DAY OF VEXATION

WHEN Heidi opened her eyes on her first morning in Frankfort she wondered at all the strange things she saw about her. She rubbed her eyes vigorously, and then looked again, only to behold the selfsame things she had seen before. She was sitting in a high white bed that stood in a large room; where the light entered, hung long white draperies; on either side of the bed stood an easy chair with huge flowers on it; beyond, against one wall was a sofa with some more flowers of the same kind, and in front of it stood a round table; in one corner she saw a washstand with many things on it of whose use she knew nothing.

But soon she remembered that she was in Frankfort, and all that had happened the day before; she could even recall quite clearly the many instructions the lady had given her, so far as she had heard them.

Heidi sprang out of bed to dress herself, and as soon as she had finished, ran to one of the windows and then to the other; she wanted to see the sky and the earth outside, for behind these heavy

curtains she felt as though she were in a cage. She tried to draw them aside, and when she found she could not, she crept behind them so as to get closer to the window. But it was so far up that her head was just high enough to allow her to look out. But she did not find what she sought, and so ran back to the other window; but all she saw was a brick wall with many windows, and beyond it, more walls and more windows.

Heidi began to feel uneasy. It was very early, for at her grandfather's she always rose with the sun, and then ran out of doors at once to see whether the sky was blue and the sun shining; whether the little flowers had opened their eyes and the tall pine trees were swaying in the wind. As a little bird that finds itself for the first time behind gilded bars flies back and forth in vain endeavor to slip between them and regain its life of freedom, so Heidi ran from one window to the other in the hope of finding some way to open it, for she felt sure that beyond these walls and windows there must be green grass to be seen on the earth below, and beyond, on the sloping hill-sides, the last patches of melting snow; and it was this that Heidi longed to see.

But the windows refused to yield, no matter how hard she pushed and pulled, or tried to thrust her little fingers under the sash to get a firmer hold,

and so succeeded. Everything was as firm and unyielding as though made of iron. After a long time she concluded that her efforts were useless and so gave them up; then she wondered whether by going out of the house, and running behind all those walls, she would find the grass and trees, for she remembered that in entering the house on the evening before, she had walked only on stones. But now she heard a knock at the door, and then it opened, and she caught sight of Tinette's head and heard her say:—

"Breakfast ready!"

To Heidi these words by no means meant an invitation to come down and eat; on the contrary, the maid's scornful face seemed to give warning not to come too near her much more plainly than a bidding to follow her; Heidi understood the look on Tinette's face much better than the words she spoke, and acted accordingly. She drew the little footstool out from under the table, placed it in one corner of the room and sat down on it; then she waited very quietly to see what would happen next. After a while she heard something come, and with a great deal of noise; it was Fräulein Rottenmeier who was excited again, and called into Heidi's room:—

"What is the matter, Adelheid? Don't you understand what breakfast means? Come along!"

What this meant Heidi knew very well and rose at once to follow her into the dining-room where Klara was already at the table; she greeted Heidi with a pleasant "Good-morning." The little invalid's face wore a much more cheerful look than usual, in anticipation of all the curious things that were likely to happen during the day.

The breakfast passed without any disturbance, for Heidi ate her bread and butter very properly; when it was over, Klara was wheeled into the study, and Fräulein Rottenmeier told Heidi to follow her and remain with her until the arrival of the Herr Kandidat, when the lessons would begin. As soon as the two children were alone together Heidi said:

"Where can I find a place to look out and all the way down to the ground?"

"Open any of the windows, and look out, to be sure," was Klara's amused reply.

"But the windows can't be opened," said Heidi in a despondent tone.

"Oh, yes, they can," said Klara, reassuringly; "you are not strong enough, and I cannot help you; but Sebastian will open one for you if you ask him."

It was a great relief to Heidi to learn that the windows could be opened, and that she could look out; for the feeling of being imprisoned within

four walls that she had first felt in her chamber had not left her.

Klara now asked Heidi many questions about her home, which the child gladly answered, telling of her life on the Alm with her grandfather and the goats; of the days up on the pasture, and of all the many things that were so dear to her.

Meanwhile the tutor had arrived, but Fräulein Rottenmeier did not as usual conduct him at once into the study, but led the way to the dining-room, where she seated herself beside him and in great excitement told him of the unfortunate plight in which she found herself, and how it had been brought about.

She related how some time ago she had written to Herr Sesemann, who was then in Paris, that it had long been the wish of his little daughter to have a playmate in the house, and that she herself believed that a companion would increase Klara's interest in her studies and would entertain her at other times.

The fact was that Fräulein Rottenmeier wished to have some one in the house who would relieve her of the task of entertaining the little invalid whenever she wearied of it herself, which was not seldom the case.

Herr Sesemann had replied that he would be glad to have his daughter's wish fulfilled, but with

the one condition that the new member of the household should in every respect be treated as though she were his own child, for he would tolerate no cruelty to children in his home. "Which," remarked Fräulein Rottenmeier, "was a very unnecessary suggestion, for who had any intention of being cruel to children?"

She then went on to tell how shamefully she had been deceived with regard to the child, and related all the instances of her utter lack of understanding, from which she concluded that the Herr Kandidat would have to begin his instructions literally with the A B C, while she herself would have to teach the child the very first principles of proper behavior. From this unfortunate predicament she could see only one way of escape, which was, that the Herr Kandidat should declare it to be impossible to teach two children of such entirely different ability at the same time without great disadvantage to the more advanced pupil. This would be regarded by Herr Sesemann as sufficient reason to dissolve the agreement, and the child could then be sent home at once; for this was a step she would not dare to take without his permission, now that Herr Sesemann knew the child had come.

The Herr Kandidat, however, was a cautious man and never one-sided in his opinions. He tried

to comfort Fräulein Rottenmeier with many consoling words and the suggestion that although the little girl was so backward in one way, she might be so much more advanced in another, and that this would soon adjust itself by means of well-regulated instruction.

When Fräulein Rottenmeier saw that the tutor would not come to her assistance, but that, on the contrary, he was quite willing to teach the A B C, she led the way to the study at once and, as soon as he had entered, closed the door after him, while she herself remained on the other side of it, for she had a horror of lessons in A B C.

In deep thought she now paced the room, for she had to decide how the servants were to address the newcomer. Herr Sesemann had directed that the child was to be treated in every respect like his own daughter, and that, thought Fräulein Rottenmeier, could only have reference to her relation to the servants. But she was not allowed to follow her thoughts long undisturbed, for suddenly she heard a loud crash from the direction of the study, followed by an anxious call for Sebastian. She rushed into the room, and there lay books, inkstands, copy-books, and all the many things necessary to study in a confused heap on the floor, with the table cover on top of all, and a little black stream running out from underneath and all the

way across the floor. Heidi was nowhere to be seen.

"Oh dear! This is the beginning! Table cover, books, work-basket—everything in the ink! Never before has such a thing happened. That dreadful child is to blame for it, I know!"

The tutor stood looking down disconsolately at the havoc which had been made, and to which even he could see only one side, and that a very distressing one. But Klara seemed very much amused over this very unusual occurrence and its effect on the others.

"Yes, Heidi did it, but quite by accident," she explained at once, "and she must certainly not be punished. She was in such a hurry to get away that she caught the table cover and dragged it with her, and then everything went tumbling after. A number of carriages were just passing when she jumped up, and she probably wanted to look at them, for she may never have seen one before."

"There, Herr Kandidat! Isn't it just as I told you?" exclaimed Fräulein Rottenmeier. "The creature lacks all sense of what is proper. She hasn't the least idea what a lesson is, nor that she ought to sit still and listen. But where has she gone? Perhaps she has run away! What would Herr Sesemann say, if—."

With that Fräulein Rottenmeier was out of the

door and down the stairs, where she came upon Heidi standing at the open door looking up and down the street with a puzzled air.

"What is it? What are you after? How dared you run off like this?" asked Fräulein Rottenmeier angrily as soon as she saw the child.

"I heard the wind in the pine trees, but I cannot see them, and now I do not even hear them any more," replied Heidi with a look of disappointment in her eyes that were turned in the direction in which the carriages were disappearing. To the child the noise had suggested the rush of the southwind among the pine trees, and in her delight at the familiar tones she had run after them.

"Pine trees? Pine trees? We are not in the woods! What foolish notion is this? Come up and see what you have done?" So saying Fräulein Rottenmeier went up the stairs with Heidi following her.

When the child saw the destruction she had wrought she stood aghast, for in her joy and haste to hear the pine trees, she had not noticed that she was dragging everything with her.

"This will be excused once, but not a second time," said Fräulein Rottenmeier sternly, as she pointed to the wreck on the floor. "During lesson time you are to sit still and pay attention; if you

cannot do that of your own accord, I will have to tie you to your chair. Do you understand what I mean?"

"Yes," answered Heidi; "but I will sit still;" for by this time she had learned what was expected of her.

Sebastian and Tinette now came in to put things in order, and the tutor went home; for there could be no further thought of lessons for that day. There had certainly been no temptation to yawn this morning.

In the afternoon Klara always rested for a while, and during this time Heidi was free to do as she liked; so Fräulein Rottenmeier had told her in the morning.

When dinner was over and Klara had lain down to rest in her reclining chair, Fräulein Rottenmeier went to her room, and Heidi knew that the time had come when she could do as she liked. And she was glad of it, for there was something she had been longing to do all day. She required help, however, and accordingly stationed herself in the middle of the hall, so that the one whom she intended to ask should not escape her. And, as she had hoped, Sebastian soon appeared coming upstairs with a large tray on which was the silver that had been used at dinner, and was now to be returned to the dining-room closet for safekeeping.

As soon as he was on the last step Heidi placed herself before him and said with great distinctness:—

"Only Sebastian or you!"

Sebastian's eyes grew wide with astonishment, and then he said in a tone of resentment:—

"What does this mean, Mamsell?"

"I would like to ask you something," said Heidi, "but it really is nothing naughty like this morning," she added soothingly, for she saw that Sebastian was vexed, and thought it must be on account of the ink she had spilled on the floor.

"Oh, indeed! And pray, why do you say: 'Only Sebastian or you?' Tell me that first," said Sebastian in as angry a tone as before.

"I am to say so, always; Fräulein Rottenmeier told me so," was Heidi's answer.

Upon hearing this Sebastian laughed so loud that Heidi looked up at him in surprise, for she had seen nothing to laugh at. But Sebastian had understood at once what Fräulein Rottenmeier had meant, and so was highly amused.

"Very good," said he, "now what is it you want, Mamsell?"

It was Heidi who was vexed now. "My name is not Mamsell," said she with some irritation; "it is Heidi."

"Very true; but the same lady has ordered that

I am to call you Mamsell," explained Sebastian.

"Oh, has she? Well, then I shall have to be called so," said Heidi in a tone of resignation, for she had discovered by this time that everything must be done according to Fräulein Rottenmeier's orders. "Now I have three names," she added with a little sigh.

"What did the little Mamsell wish to ask me?" inquired Sebastian who was now in the dining-room arranging the silver.

"How can I open a window, Sebastian?"

"This way," said Sebastian, as he threw open one side of the great window; "this way."

Heidi ran to it, but she could see nothing, for her head reached only as high as the sill.

"There," said Sebastian, as he got a high foot-stool and set it under the window; "now the little Mamsell can look out and see what there is out there."

In great delight Heidi climbed up on the foot-stool and looked out of the window, but turned back at once with a look of great disappointment on her face.

"There is nothing down there but the stony street—nothing," said the child dejectedly. "But if I go to the other side of the house, what shall I see then, Sebastian?"

"Just the same," was the reply.

"But where, then, can I go to look down into the valley, and far away?"

"You have to climb up into a high tower, a church tower, like that one yonder, with the golden ball at the top."

Without a moment's delay Heidi got down from the footstool, ran out of the door and down the stairs, and was out on the street. But here she did not find things as she had expected. In looking out of the window it had seemed to her that she could reach the tower by simply crossing the street; but now she went the entire length of it, and yet did not find the church, nor could she so much as see the tower. She turned down another street, and went on and on. Many people passed her, but they seemed in such a hurry that she thought they would not have time to direct her. At length she saw a boy standing on the next corner; he carried a hand-organ on his back and a curious looking creature on his arm. Heidi ran up to him and asked:—

"Where is the church tower with the golden ball on top?"

"Don't know," was the answer.

"Who can tell me where it is?" Heidi inquired further.

"Don't know."

"Don't you know of any other church with a high tower?"

"Of course I do."

"Well, come and show me where it is."

"Show me first what you will give me, if I do," said the boy holding out his hand.

Heidi searched her pocket and brought forth a little picture card on which was a beautiful wreath of red roses; she looked at it a while, for she regretted to part with it. Klara had given it to her, and she had only had it since morning. But she must look down into the valley and far away over the green mountain slopes.

"There!" she said, holding out the picture; "would you like that?"

The boy drew back his hand and shook his head.

"Well, what do you want?" asked Heidi, glad to put her picture back into her pocket.

"Money."

"I haven't any; but Klara has, and she will give me some. How much do you want?"

"Twenty pfennigs."

"Well, come on, then."

The two now went down a long street, and on the way Heidi asked her companion what he was carrying on his back; to this he replied that under the cloth was a handsome organ that gave the sweetest music, if he but turned the handle.

All at once the boy stopped, for they were in front of an old church with a high tower. "There," said he.

"But how can I get in?" asked Heidi, with a glance at the tightly closed door.

"Don't know," was the answer.

"Do you think I can ring, as we do for Sebastian?"

"Don't know."

Heidi soon discovered a bell on one side of the door and gave it a vigorous pull.

"When I go up, you must wait for me down here, for I don't know the way home, and you must show me."

"What will you give me, if I do?"

"What do you want this time?"

"Twenty pfennigs more."

The children now heard the old lock turn, and the door opened with a creak; then an old man stepped out, and, upon seeing two children, looked surprised at first and then rather vexed.

"How dare you ring the bell and bring me down stairs," he said indignantly. "Can't you read what it says over the bell? 'Only for those who wish to go up into the tower!' "

The boy's only reply was to point to Heidi, who said:—

"That is just what I want to do—go up into the tower."

"What do you want to do up there?" asked the tower-keeper. "Did any one send you?"

"No," replied the child; "I want to go up, so that I may look down."

"Be off with you, and don't try that joke again; for you'll not get off so easily the next time," said the tower-keeper angrily as he turned to close the door.

But Heidi quickly laid a detaining hand on the skirt of his coat, and said pleadingly:—

"Only this one time, please!"

He glanced back at her and saw such a beseeching look in the child's eyes that he changed his mind entirely. Taking her by the hand, he said very kindly:—

"If you care so much to go, I will take you up."

The boy sat down on the stone steps outside the door to show that he did not mean to go with them, but would wait there.

Holding fast to the tower-keeper's hand, Heidi climbed up many, many steps which soon grew narrower and narrower; finally they came to a very steep little stairway, and when they had gone up this, they were at the top. Then the keeper lifted Heidi in his arms and held her up to the open window.

"There," he said, "now you can put your head out of the window and look down."

Heidi did so, and saw a sea of roofs, chimneys and church-spires spread out beneath her. She

soon drew back her head, and said dejectedly:—

"It isn't as I thought it would be at all."

"There, now! Just as I supposed! What does a little thing like you know about a view? Come, we'll go down now, and don't you ever ring the bell to a church-tower again."

The keeper set the child on her feet and then climbed down the narrow stairs ahead of her. To the left of the landing, where the steps grew broader, was a door which led to the keeper's room, while on the other side the floor extended to where it met the slanting roof. Here stood a large basket in front of which sat a big gray cat, that gave a growl of warning as Heidi approached, for the basket was the home of her kittens, and she meant to let every one know that she would allow no meddling with her family affairs. Heidi stopped to look at her in astonishment, for she had never seen so huge a cat before; but it was no wonder that she was well fed, for the old tower swarmed with mice and she could easily catch half a dozen fat ones for her dinner each day.

The keeper noticed Heidi's admiring glances, and said good-naturedly:—

"Go and look at the little ones; she won't hurt you while I am near."

One glance into the basket was sufficient to make Heidi burst into cries of delight.

"Oh the dear little things! Oh, what lovely kittens!" she exclaimed again and again, as she ran from one side of the basket to the other, to see all the funny motions and capers of the seven or eight little kittens as they jumped and tumbled and sprawled over one another in restless play.

"Would you like to have one?" asked the keeper who had been looking on in great amusement as Heidi danced about the basket.

"What? To be my own? To keep always?" asked Heidi eagerly, and hardly able to realize that such happiness might really be hers.

"Yes, to be sure; you may have more than one; you may have them all, if you have room for them at home," said the man, for he was glad to be rid of the kittens without doing them harm.

Heidi was in ecstasies; for she thought that in Klara's great house there surely must be room enough for the kittens. And how surprised and delighted Klara would be at the sight of the pretty little creatures!

"But how can I take them with me?" she asked putting her hands into the basket to catch one right off; but with a spring the old cat was on her arm, and hissing at her so fiercely that Heidi shrank back in alarm.

"I will bring them to you if you will tell me where you live," said the keeper, as he stroked the



"Oh, the dear little things!"

cat to make her good-natured again; for the two were good friends and had lived in the tower together for many years.

"To Herr Sesemann's house. It is a very large one, and on the door is a golden dog's head with a big ring in his mouth," were Heidi's directions.

But the keeper did not need them, for he had spent many years up in the tower, and knew every house in sight; and, besides, Sebastian was an old friend of his.

"I know the house very well," said the man; "but to whom shall I say that I have brought the little things? For whom shall I ask? You are not Herr Sesemann's child?"

"No, but Klara is, and she will be so pleased to see the kittens."

The keeper turned to go down the stairs, but Heidi could not tear herself away from the amusing sight.

"If I only could take one or two of them with me; one for Klara and one for me. May I?"

"Well, wait a minute," said the keeper, and taking up the mother cat he carried her into his room; there he sat her down in front of her dish of milk, and, closing the door on her, returned to Heidi. "There," said he, "take two of them."

Heidi's eyes beamed with pleasure as she chose first a white one and then a white and yel-

low striped one. Slipping one into her right pocket and the other into the left, she followed the keeper down the stairs.

The boy was still sitting on the stone steps, and as soon as the keeper had closed the door after Heidi, the child said:—

"Now how shall we get to Herr Sesemann's house?"

"Don't know," was the answer.

Heidi began to describe as best she could the front door, the windows and the steps; but the boy shook his head, for he knew none of these.

"Now listen," continued Heidi, hoping to make it clear to him; "out of one of the windows we can see a big, big gray house, and the roof, goes so"— and here she drew imaginary points in the air with her finger.

At this the boy jumped to his feet, for he had probably recognized one of the landmarks by which he found his way about the city. He began to run, and Heidi after him, never stopping until they came to the door on which was the large brass dog's head. Heidi rang the bell. Sebastian opened the door, and as soon as he saw Heidi, he said urgently:—

"Quick, quick!"

Heidi sprang in and Sebastian quickly closed the door after her. He had not seen the boy who

was standing outside with a dazed look on his face.

"Quick, little Mamsell," Sebastian urged again. "Go right into the dining-room, they are at supper. Fräulein Rottenmeier looks as threatening as a loaded cannon. But why does the little Mamsell do such a thing as to run off without a word to anybody?"

Heidi went into the dining-room. Fräulein Rottenmeier did not so much as glance at her, nor did Klara say anything; the silence was becoming uncomfortable. Sebastian pushed Heidi's chair into place. When the child was seated, the housekeeper began with a severe look and in a sternly solemn voice:—

"Adelheid, I will speak with you later; for the present I will only say that you have been very naughty, and deserve to be severely punished for leaving the house as you did without permission—without so much as a word to anyone—and wandering about the streets until evening. Such conduct is almost beyond belief."

"Meow," came the seeming reply.

This was too much for the lady's temper. In a voice shrill with anger, she cried:—

"What, Alelheid! You dare to make an ill-timed jest in addition to your behavior of this afternoon? Have a care, I tell you!"

"I am"—Heidi began.

"Meow, meow!"

Sebastian almost flung his platter on the table in his haste to get out of the room.

"That will do," Fräulein Rottenmeier attempted to say, but her voice was so choked with anger that she could hardly be heard. "Leave the table and go to your room!"

The frightened child rose, but before leaving the room tried to explain.

"Truly, I am"—

"Meow, meow, meow!"

"But, Heidi," Klara remonstrated, "you see that you are vexing Fräulein Rottenmeier; why don't you stop saying 'meow?' "

"I am not doing it; it is the kittens," Heidi was at last permitted to say without interruption.

"What? Where? Cats? Young cats?" shrieked Fräulein Rottenmeier. "Sebastian! Tinette! Look for the horrid creatures, and take them away!" With that she escaped into the study and locked the door after her, that she might feel quite safe; for of all living things, cats were the most abominable to this lady.

Sebastian was just outside the dining-room door making a desperate effort to stop laughing before he had to go in again. While serving Heidi he had caught sight of a kitten's head peeping out of her pocket, and had foreseen the coming storm.

When the trouble began, he could hardly control himself long enough to get the dish he held safely on the table. At last he could keep a straight face, and re-entered the room, but not until after the terrified lady's cries for help had ceased. What he saw within looked quiet and peaceful enough; Klara was holding the little kittens in her lap while Heidi knelt beside her, and both children were playing in perfect delight with the two tiny graceful creatures.

"Sebastian," said Klara as he entered, "you must help us; you must make a bed for the kittens where Fräulein Rottenmeier will not find them. You know she is afraid of them, and will want to get rid of them; but we want to keep the dear little things to play with when we are alone. Where can you put them?"

"I will manage that, Fräulein Klara," replied Sebastian willingly. "I will make a nice little bed in a basket and set it where the timid lady will not find it. You can depend on me."

Sebastian set to work at once, chuckling to himself all the while. "For," thought he, "we haven't seen the end of this yet," and he was by no means sorry to see Fräulein Rottenmeier tormented a bit once in a while.

Not until it was almost bed-time did the housekeeper venture to open the door just a little and ask through this narrow opening:—

"Have the hateful creatures been taken away?"

"Oh yes! Certainly, certainly!" said Sebastian, who had busied himself about the room in anticipation of this very question. Quickly and quietly he took the kittens from Klara's lap and disappeared with them.

The special lecture which Fräulein Rottenmeier had in store for Heidi was postponed until the next day; for she felt too much exhausted to deliver it after the emotions of anger and fright which she had suffered that day, and all of which Heidi had unwittingly brought upon her, one after the other. She withdrew to her own room, and Klara and Heidi followed her example in perfect peace of mind, for they knew their kittens were safely stowed away in a snug little bed.

CHAPTER VIII

KLARA'S HOME IS DULL NO LONGER

ON the following day, just after Sebastian had opened the door for the tutor and conducted him to the study, the door bell was rung with such violence that Sebastian fairly flew down stairs. "For," thought he, "nobody rings the bell like that except the master himself; he must have returned unexpectedly." He opened the door as quickly as possible, and there stood a ragged street urchin with a hand-organ on his back.

"What does this mean?" said Sebastian angrily. "I will teach you to pull bells out of their sockets. What business have you here?"

"I want to see Klara," was the answer.

"You unkempt ragamuffin, you! Can't you say 'Fräulein Klara,' like the rest of us? What do you want of Fräulein Klara?" snapped Sebastian.

"She owes me forty pfennigs," declared the boy.

"You must be a little daft! To begin with, how do you know that there is a Fräulein Klara here at all?"

"Yesterday I showed her the way—that was twenty pfennigs; then I brought her back again—that made forty."

"That proves it's all a pack of lies, for Fräulein Klara never goes out. Now be off from here to where you belong, before I help you!"

But the boy was not to be frightened away so easily; he remained standing where he was and said sturdily:—

"But I did see her on the street and I can tell you how she looks. She has short black hair that curls, and her eyes are black too; she wears a brown dress and doesn't talk as we do."

"Oho!" thought Sebastian with a chuckle, "that is the little Mamsell. She has got something new under way." Then he said to the boy:—

"Very well, come in and follow me; when I go into the room you may wait outside the door until I come back; when I open it for you, step right in and begin a tune; Fräulein Klara will be glad to hear it."

The two went upstairs; Sebastian knocked at the study door and was called in.

"There is a boy here who insists upon seeing Fräulein Klara herself," Sebastian announced.

So unusual an occurrence was very welcome to Klara.

"Bring him right in," she said quickly. Then turning to the tutor, she added: "That is right, is it not, Herr Kandidat, since he wants to speak to me?"

The boy was already in the room, and according to his instructions began to play at once. To escape the despised A B C Fräulein Rottenmeier had busied herself in various ways about the dining-room. Suddenly she dropped her hands to listen. Were those sounds coming from the street? But they seemed so near. How could the music of a hand-organ be coming from the study? And yet—it surely was. She rushed through the long dining-room and tore open the door. There—incredible as it was—there, in the middle of the room stood a ragged urchin vigorously turning the handle of a street-organ. The Herr Kandidat was making great efforts to say something, but his voice was drowned by the music to which Klara and Heidi were listening with the happiest of faces.

"Stop! Stop at once!" cried Fräulein Rottenmeier from the doorway, but her words were lost in the music. She ran toward the boy, but suddenly felt something between her feet, and looking down beheld an ugly black creature crawling toward her; it was a turtle. At sight of it, the housekeeper gave a leap into the air, such as she had not made for many a year; then she screamed, "Sebastian, Sebastian!" with all the strength of her lungs.

The music came to a sudden end, for this time

she had made herself heard. Sebastian was already outside the door, doubled up with laughter, for he had seen the agile leap which had so exhausted Fräulein Rottenmeier that she dropped helplessly into a chair as he entered.

"Away with them—boy and beast! Get them out of my sight, Sebastian, immediately!" she cried out to him.

Sebastian obeyed at once. He pushed the boy, who had quickly picked up his turtle, out of the room ahead of him, and, as soon as they were outside the door, pressed something into the little fellow's hand, and said hurriedly:—

"Forty pfennigs from Fräulein Klara, and forty more for the music. You did very well," and with that he closed the front door behind him.

In the study all was quiet again; the lessons had been resumed, and Fräulein Rottenmeier had seated herself in one corner of the room so that her presence might serve as a check on any further mischief. After the lessons were over she meant to investigate the occurrence of the morning and punish the offender in a way that would not soon be forgotten.

Very soon another knock at the door was heard and Sebastian appeared once more, this time with the announcement that a large basket had arrived



"Stop! Stop at once!"

with the request that it be at once delivered to Fräulein Klara.

"To me?" asked Klara in great surprise, and very curious to learn what it might contain. "Bring it here and let me see what it looks like."

Sebastian brought in a covered basket, and, as soon as he had set it down, disappeared.

"I think it will be best to finish your lessons first and then open the basket," said Fräulein Rottenmeier.

Klara could not imagine what had been sent her, and cast longing glances at the basket.

"Herr Kandidat," she said, stopping in the middle of a declension, "may I just peep in a moment to see what there is in it, and then go right on with the lesson?"

"In one way it seems advisable, but in another not," replied the tutor; "in its favor would be the fact that if your attention is given to the basket"—

But his remark was never finished, for at this moment the cover, which had not been put on tightly, slipped off, and out jumped, one, two, three little kittens, and then two more, and yet another, all leaping and racing about until the room seemed to be full of the nimble little creatures. They sprang over the tutor's feet, clawed at his dress, scampered about between her feet, and trousers, clambered up Fräulein Rottenmeier's

jumped up on Klara's chair, all scratching, biting and mewing; it was indeed a hubbub.

In perfect rapture Klara cried again and again:—

"Oh, the cunning little things! How they jump! Look, Heidi! Look at this one! And that one! See here!"

Full of glee, Heidi flew after them into all the four corners of the room. The Herr Kandidat stood by the table drawing up one foot and then the other to avoid the attack of the kittens. Fräulein Rottenmeier sat in her chair, in speechless amazement at first, but soon found her voice, and screamed: "Tinette! Tinette! Sebastian! Sebastian!" for under no consideration would she have dared to leave her chair for fear that one of the little monsters might touch her. At last the servants came in answer to her repeated cries, and Sebastian gathered up the kittens one after the other and put them back into the basket. Then he carried them up to the attic where he had made a bed for yesterday's arrivals. The lesson hour had passed again without any one having had the least temptation to yawn.

Late in the evening, when Fräulein Rottenmeier had sufficiently recovered from the morning's excitement, she summoned Sebastian and Tinette to come to the study, where she made a thorough en-

quiry into the occurrences of the morning. Then it appeared that Heidi had been at the bottom of it all and, during her excursion of the previous day, had got the whole affair under way. The housekeeper was white with rage and quite unable at first to find words in which to express her feelings. She motioned to the servants to leave the room. Then she turned to Heidi who was standing beside Klara's chair, and did not in the least know wherein she had offended.

"Adelheid," began Fräulein Rottenmeier in a most severe tone, "I know of but one punishment that will have any effect on a barbarian like you; we will see whether you will grow more civilized down in the dark cellar with the rats and the lizards, so that you will not try such tricks again."

Heidi heard her sentence in calm surprise, for a cellar had no horrors for her; the room adjoining her grandfather's hut, which he called the cellar, and where the pans of milk stood, and the round cheeses were kept, was rather a cheerful and attractive place; and as for rats and lizards, she had never seen any.

But Klara raised a loud outcry:—

"No, no, Fräulein Rottenmeier; we must wait until papa comes home; you know he wrote that he is coming soon, and when I have told him

everything he will decide what is to be done with Heidi."

This was a demand which the housekeeper could not oppose, especially since the master of the house was really expected in a short time. She rose and said in a tone of vexation:—

"Very well, Klara, very well; but I, too, shall have something to tell Herr Sesemann." With that she left the room.

After this came two or three quiet and uneventful days; but Fräulein Rottenmeier could not regain her composure, for the disappointment she had suffered in Heidi was hourly before her, and it seemed as though since the child had come, everything in the house was out of joint and would not run smoothly again.

Klara was very cheerful; her days were never dull now, for Heidi did the most amusing things in lesson time. She always got the letters confused in the most extraordinary way, and did not seem able to learn them. Sometimes while the tutor was describing them to her, and was trying to make them clearer by likening them to a bird's bill or a horn, she would cry out joyfully: "It is a goat!" or "It is an eagle!" for the descriptions brought almost anything to her mind save the letters themselves.

Toward the end of each afternoon Heidi would sit beside Klara and tell her about her mountain

home and the life she led there, until the memory of it grew so vivid and the longing for it so great that she always ended by saying:—

"Now it must be time for me to go home; to-morrow I must surely go."

But Klara always pacified the child, and persuaded her to wait until her father's return, when he would decide what it was best to do. And if Heidi always yielded and was soon content again, it was because of the pleasing thought, which she cherished in secret, that with each passing day the little heap of rolls for the grandmother was growing larger by two. For at dinner and supper she always found a beautiful white roll beside her plate, which she quickly slipped into her pocket, for she could not have enjoyed it herself, knowing that the grandmother had nothing but hard black bread to eat that she could hardly bite.

For two hours after dinner Heidi always sat alone in her room without stirring from the spot, for she was now aware that in Frankfort she was not allowed to run out of doors as she used to at home, and so she never attempted it again. To go into the dining-room and talk to Sebastian was also against Fräulein Rottenmeier's orders, and to open a conversation with Tinette never entered her mind; on the contrary, she avoided her carefully, for the maid always spoke to her in a scornful

tone, and made fun of her, which the child understood very well.

And so Heidi had plenty of time to think how the mountains were growing green, and how all the yellow flowers were dancing in the sunshine and everything was looking so beautiful in the golden light—the snow, and the mountains and the wide valley below; and then her longing to be there would grow so strong that she could hardly endure it. She remembered, too, that her Aunt Dete had told her that she could go home whenever she wished.

So it happened that the day came when she could stand it no longer; she tied up all her little white rolls in the big red kerchief, put on her battered straw hat, and started off. But she had gone no farther than the front door when she met a serious obstacle to the fulfilment of her plans—no less a one that Fräulein Rottenmeier herself, who was just returning from a walk. She stood still and stared at Heidi in dumb amazement, her eyes resting last and longest on the well-filled red kerchief. After a while she found her voice.

"What sort of performance is this? What does it mean? Have I not given you strict orders never to go wandering about the streets? Now you are trying it again, and looking like a gypsy at that."

"I did not mean to wander about the streets; I was only going home," replied the frightened child.

"What? What do I hear? Home? You intended to go home?" cried the housekeeper, wringing her hands in her excitement. "You meant to run away? If Herr Sesemann should hear of that! To run away from his house! Be sure not to let him hear of it! And what is it that doesn't please you in this house, pray? Do you not get much better treatment than you deserve? Do you suffer for the want of anything? Have you ever, in all your life, been better fed and lodged and served than you are here? Answer me!"

"No," replied Heidi.

"Of course not!" snapped Fräulein Rottenmeier. "There is nothing you can wish for, nothing! You are an ungrateful creature, and so well cared for that you cannot find mischief enough in which to vent your spirits!"

Heidi could suppress her pent-up feelings no longer, and now broke forth:—

"But I really must go home, for if I stay away so long, Snowhopli will bleat so sadly, and the grandmother will be tired of waiting for me, and Goldfinch will be whipped if Peter gets no more cheese; and here I can never see the sun when it says good-night to the mountains; and if the eagle

should fly over Frankfort he would scream louder than ever, because so many people sit huddled together and vex one another instead of going up on the mountains where they would be happier."

"Merciful heavens! the child has gone mad!" cried Fräulein Rottenmeier in terror, and rushed up the stairs with such speed that she ran against Sebastian who was just going down.

"Go and fetch that wretched creature up at once," she ordered while she rubbed her head, that had got a hard rap.

"Yes, yes, I will," said he, "and thank you kindly," he added in an undertone as he rubbed his head too, for he had got the worst of it.

Heidi had not moved from the spot, but stood there with flashing eyes, trembling from head to foot with excitement.

"Well, well, is there something new under way?" was the amused servant's question; but when he looked at the child more closely as she stood there still motionless, he patted her gently on the shoulder and said consolingly: "Come, come, the little Mamsell mustn't take it so to heart! Be cheery, that's better than anything else. She almost cracked my head a moment ago, too; but we mustn't let her frighten us! What? Still on the same spot? But we'll have to go up, for she said so."

Then Heidi turned and went up stairs, but with a slow and listless step, which was not her way at all. It grieved Sebastian to see her so, and he followed the child and said all he could to encourage her.

"You musn't give up, and be downhearted. Be brave! We've had such a sensible little Mamsell; she hasn't cried since she's been with us, and most of them cry about a dozen times a day at her age. I know that well enough! The kittens are having a jolly time up stairs; they are chasing each other all over the attic like mad. After a while, when the lady in there has gone, we'll go up and look at them, eh?"

Heidi nodded her head, but with so little spirit that it made Sebastian's kind heart ache to see her, and his eyes followed her in pity as she crept away to her room.

At supper Fräulein Rottenmeier said nothing, but kept a strangely watchful eye on Heidi as though she expected the child to do some sudden and unheard-of thing. But Heidi sat as still as a mouse, and did not so much as move; she neither ate nor drank, but only slipped her roll quickly into her pocket.

On the following morning Fräulein Rottenmeier met the tutor at the head of the stairs, and with a mysterious air beckoned him to follow her into the

dining-room, where, in great excitement, she confided to him her fear that the change of climate together with the strange sights and new mode of life had affected the child's mind. She told him of Heidi's attempt to run away, and repeated to him what she could remember of the child's strange talk at the time.

The tutor sought to quiet and comfort the agitated lady by assuring her that close observation had led him to believe that although Adelheid was somewhat eccentric in one way, in another she was quite sensible, and that, with suitable training the child's mind would receive the proper balance. He regarded it as a more serious matter that the child could not get beyond the A B C, and could not yet recognize her letters.

Upon hearing this, Fräulein Rottenmeier grew a little calmer and left the tutor to begin his lessons. Later in the afternoon the outlandish costume in which Heidi had made her attempt to escape came to her mind, and she determined to replenish the child's wardrobe with some of Klara's half-used clothes, that she might present a better appearance when Herr Sesemann returned. She told this to Klara, who gladly consented and straightway gave Heidi a number of dresses, coats and hats. Accordingly, the housekeeper went to Heidi's room to examine her clothes and decide

what should be kept and what be discarded. But in a few minutes she returned looking highly disgusted.

"What have I had to discover now, Adelheid!" she cried. "In your closet, which is a place for clothes, Adelheid, on the floor of this closet, what did I find? A heap of little rolls! Think of it, Klara! Bread in a clothes closet! And such a lot of it!"

"Tinette!" she called to the maid in the dining-room, "take away all the stale bread you will find in Adelheid's closet, and the old straw hat on her table, too."

"No, no! I must keep the hat, and the rolls are for the grandmother," screamed Heidi as she jumped up to run after Tinette; but Fräulein Rottenmeier held her back.

"You will stay where you are, and the rubbish will be put where it belongs," she said severely as she kept a firm hand on the child.

This was too much for Heidi; she threw herself down beside Klara's chair and began to cry in perfect despair; louder and more heart-rending grew her sobs, as in a voice choked with grief she exclaimed over and over again: "Now the grandmother will not have any rolls! They were all for her, and now they are all gone and she won't have any at all!"

Heidi cried as though her heart would break. Fräulein Rottenmeier ran out of the room, and Klara grew quite anxious at the sight of the child's terrible distress.

"Heidi, Heidi, don't sob so," she said pleadingly; "listen to me, do! You needn't grieve so, for when you go home, I will give you just as many rolls for the grandmother; yes, even more than you had; and they will be fresh and soft, while yours would be quite hard by that time, if, indeed, they are not so already! Come, Heidi, come; please do not cry so!"

It was a long time, however, before Heidi could control her sobs; but she understood Klara's promise and relied on it, else there would have been no end to her sobbing at all. As it was, she felt the need of reassuring herself of this new hope, and so asked Klara again and again in a voice broken by the last of her sobs:—

"Will you give me just as many? Just as many for the grandmother?" To which Klara replied each time:—

"Certainly; just as many, and more, if you will only be happy again."

At supper Heidi's eyes were still red with weeping, and when she caught sight of the roll beside her plate, she gave a convulsive sob, but controlled herself with a great effort, for she had learned

that she must conduct herself quietly at meal time.

While waiting on the table, Sebastian made the most wonderful gestures whenever he caught Heidi's eye; first he would touch his own head and then point to hers, after which he would nod and wink, as if to say: "Be of good cheer! I saw it and have taken care of it."

That night, when Heidi went to her room, and turned back the coverlet on her bed, there lay her crushed straw hat hidden away beneath it. In rapture she drew forth the little old hat and crushed it yet a bit more in her joy at finding it again; then she wrapped it up in the kerchief and stowed it away in the farthermost corner of her closet.

It was Sebastian who had tucked it under the coverlet; for when Tinette was called to take it away he was in the dining-room and so had heard Heidi's cry of distress. Then, when the maid went to carry out her orders, he followed her, and as she came out of the child's room with the load of bread in her arms and the hat on top of it, he quickly took it from her, saying: "I'll attend to this."

With great satisfaction he had put it away for Heidi, and it was this that he had tried to make her understand at supper, in the hope of cheering her.

CHAPTER IX

THE MASTER OF THE HOUSE HEARS STRANGE TALES

A FEW days after the events just related, there was great commotion in the Sesemann house, and much running up and down stairs. The master of the house had returned, and Sebastian and Tinette had to carry up one armful after another from the well-filled carriage, for Herr Sesemann always brought many beautiful things home with him.

He, himself, went first of all to his daughter's room to greet her. He found Heidi sitting beside her, for it was late in the afternoon, when the two children were always together. Klara gave her father a loving welcome, for she was very fond of him, and her good papa greeted his little daughter no less tenderly. Then he held out his hand to Heidi who had quietly withdrawn to one corner of the room.

"And this is our little Swiss girl," he said kindly; "come and shake hands with me. There, that's right. Now tell me, are you good friends, you and Klara? Or do you get cross and scold each other, and then cry and make it up only to begin all over again?"

"No, Klara is always good to me," was Heidi's answer.

"And Heidi has never so much as tried to quarrel, papa," added Klara quickly.

"That is right, and I am glad to hear it," said her father as he rose to go. "But now my little Klara must excuse me and let me get something to eat, for I have had nothing to-day. Afterward I will come back and show you what I have brought you."

Herr Sesemann went into the dining-room where Fräulein Rottenmeier was casting a last glance over the table to assure herself that all was in readiness for him. When he had seated himself, she took the place opposite him, looking the very picture of despair; turning to her, he said:—

"But my dear Fräulein Rottenmeier, what am I to think? You are wearing a terribly gloomy face for my reception. What is the matter? My little Klara seems bright and cheery enough."

"Herr Sesemann," began the housekeeper very solemnly, "it is a matter which concerns Klara; we have been shamefully deceived."

"How so?" asked Herr Sesemann quietly as he began his luncheon.

"We had decided, as you know, Herr Sesemann, to add to our family a companion for Klara, and, knowing as I do, that you wish your daughter to

be associated only with that which is good and noble, I selected a little Swiss girl, hoping to receive into our household one of those beautiful beings of whom I have often read—born of the pure mountain air, and passing through life without a touch of earth, so to speak."

"It is my opinion," remarked Herr Sesemann, "that even the children of the Alps must touch the earth if they want to get forward, else they would have been given wings instead of feet."

"Ah, Herr Sesemann, you know well enough what I mean—one of those beings of whom we have all heard, who dwell on a purer and higher level, and move through life like a breath of the ideal."

"But what kind of a companion for my little Klara would a breath of the ideal be?"

"Indeed, Herr Sesemann, I am not jesting; the matter is more serious than you seem to think; I have been horribly, yes, horribly deceived."

"But what is it that is so horrible? I have seen nothing horrible about the child," was Herr Sesemann's calm reply.

"It will be enough if I tell you of but *one* thing —of the people and animals which this creature has brought into your house during your absence."

"Animals? What am I to understand by that, Fräulein Rottenmeier?"

"It is more than anyone can understand; the conduct of this girl is beyond comprehension, except from one point of view, that at times her mind is affected."

So far Herr Sesemann had attached little importance to the matter; but if the child's mind was affected there might be most serious consequences for his daughter. He gave the housekeeper a searching glance as though to assure himself first of all that she, herself, was not afflicted in that way; but before he had time to speak, the door opened and the Herr Kandidat was announced.

"Ah, here comes the Herr Kandidat," cried Herr Sesemann; "he will explain matters. Come in, come in, and join me! The Herr Kandidat will drink a cup of coffee with me, Fräulein Rottenmeier," said Herr Sesemann, as he shook hands with the tutor. "Take a seat, take a seat—no formality, if you please. And now tell me, what ails the child who is here to be a companion for Klara? You teach her, do you not? In what way has she been bringing animals into the house, and what is the state of her mind?"

But the tutor must first express his pleasure at Herr Sesemann's safe return, for this it was that had brought him. Herr Sesemann, however, urged him to begin at once with that which he wished to know. So the tutor began:—

"If I am to give my opinion regarding this young girl, Herr Sesemann, I must first of all point out the fact that although in one way I have found her somewhat backward, this is due to a more or less neglected education, the result of a more or less protracted period of isolation during her life in the Alps; this, however, is not wholly to be deplored, for, if not too long continued, it has its advantages, no doubt, and in one way"—

"My dear Herr Kandidat," interrupted Herr Sesemann, "you are really giving yourself too much trouble. Tell me, now, were you also shocked at the sight of the animals the child brought into the house? And what do you think of her as a companion for my daughter?"

"I desire in no way to criticize this young girl harshly," the tutor began again; "for although in one way she is lacking in social experience, due to the more or less uncultured surroundings in which she lived up to the very moment of her removal to Frankfort, this short-coming will no doubt disappear during a continued stay here which will develop the, I should say, at least partially undeveloped, but in other respects well endowed mind of this young girl, and which a well-regulated guidance"—

"Please excuse me, Herr Kandidat, but don't let me interrupt you. I am—I must speak to my daughter just a moment."

So saying, Herr Sesemann vanished through the door and did not appear again. He went into the study and seated himself beside his little daughter, taking the chair from which Heidi had just risen. Turning to the child he said:—

"See here, little girl, run quickly and get me—wait a moment—get me"— Herr Sesemann could think of nothing that he wanted except an excuse to send Heidi out of the room for a few moments. "Get me a glass of water," he finished.

"Fresh water?" asked Heidi.

"Yes, to be sure; nice fresh water," replied Herr Sesemann.

Heidi ran off.

"Now, my dear little Klara," said her father as he drew his chair closer to hers and took her hand in his, "tell me very frankly and plainly what kind of animals your little playmate has brought into the house, and what reason has Fräulein Rottenmeier for thinking that the child's mind is affected at times. Do you know, my dear?"

Klara knew very well, for in her agitation the housekeeper had repeated to her the strange words Heidi had spoken, but which Klara understood very well. First of all she told her father about the turtle and then about the kittens, and last of all explained Heidi's words which had so frightened the housekeeper. After a hearty laugh Herr Sesemann asked:—

"Then you are not tired of your little playmate, and do not wish me to send her away?"

"Oh no, papa; please don't!" cried Klara in alarm. "Since Heidi has been here there is something amusing going on nearly all the time, and that makes the days so much pleasanter than when nothing ever happens at all. And Heidi tells me so much that is entertaining, too."

"Very well, very well, my dear. Ah, here is your little friend back again. Well, did you get me some nice, fresh water?" asked Herr Sesemann as Heidi handed the glass to him.

"Yes, fresh from the fountain," answered the child.

"You didn't run to the fountain yourself, did you Heidi?" asked Klara.

"Yes, I did; it is quite fresh. But I had to go a long way, for there were so many people at the first fountain that I ran to the one at the end of the street, but there were many people there, too. So I turned down the other street and got the water there. And the gentleman with the white hair sends his best regards to Herr Sesemann."

"Well, well, that was quite an expedition," said Herr Sesemann with a laugh. "And who was the gentleman?"

"He was passing the fountain, but stood still and said: 'I see you have a glass; won't you

please give me a drink? For whom are you getting the water?' And I said: 'For Herr Sesemann.' Then he laughed aloud, and told me to give you his regards, and say that he hoped you would enjoy the water."

"Indeed! I wonder who sent me so kind a wish. How did the gentleman look?" asked Herr Sesemann.

"He had a kind smile, and wore a thick gold chain on which hung a piece of gold with a big red stone in it; and on his cane I saw a horse's head."

"That is the Herr Doctor." "That is no other than my old doctor," said Klara and her father as with one voice, and Herr Sesemann laughed again as he wondered what his old friend thought of this new mode of getting water to drink.

Later in the evening, when Herr Sesemann and Fräulein Rottenmeier were sitting in the dining-room discussing a number of household matters, he told her that he wished his daughter's companion to remain with them, as he believed the child to be in her right mind, and Klara seemed to enjoy her company more than any other.

"It is my wish, therefore," said he in a very decided tone, "that the child shall always receive the kindest of treatment, and that her peculiarities are not to be regarded as faults. Should you find her more than you can manage, you can console

yourself with the pleasant prospect that you will soon have able assistance. My mother is coming to stay quite a long time with us, and there is no one, no matter how peculiar, with whom my mother cannot get on, as you are well aware, I believe, Fräulein Rottenmeier."

"Yes, indeed, Herr Sesemann, I know that very well," said Fräulein Rottenmeier, but without the look of relief that might be expected at a prospect of early assistance.

Herr Sesemann remained at home only a short time, for at the end of a fortnight he was called to Paris on business. He consoled his little daughter, who was very unwilling to let him go, with the prospect of her grandmother's intended visit, and told her that it would be only a few days now before her arrival. And in truth, Herr Sesemann had hardly gone, when a letter was received in which Frau Sesemann announced her departure from Holstein, where she lived on an old family estate, and stated the exact time of her arrival on the following day, so that the carriage might be sent for her.

The news made Klara very happy, and she talked so much and so long about "grandmamma" to Heidi that before the day was over Heidi, too, began to speak of "grandmamma;" whereupon Fräulein Rottenmeier gave her a look of great

disapproval, to which the child did not attach much importance, however, as she felt that the lady always disapproved of her.

Later in the evening, when Heidi had left the study and was on her way to bed, the housekeeper called her into her own room to tell her that she must never speak of Frau Sesemann as "grandmamma," but must always address her as gracious madam.[1]

"Do you understand?" she asked, as Heidi looked at her a little doubtfully; but at the same time she gave the child so stern a glance in return that Heidi did not dare to ask for any further explanation, although she had not fully understood this new mode of address.

[1] Gnädige Frau.

CHAPTER X

A GRANDMAMMA

ON the following evening there were signs of great preparations in the Sesemann house, and it was plainly to be seen that some one of importance was expected—some one who was not only highly regarded by all, but whose good opinion was desired as well. Tinette had a brand-new white cap on her head and Sebastian gathered up all the footstools about the house and set them in the most convenient places, so that the expected guest might find one ready for her feet wherever she might choose to sit. As the housekeeper went through the rooms on her tour of inspection, she held her head very high, as though to let everyone know that although there would soon be a new authority in the house, her own was nevertheless not on the wane.

Presently the sound of wheels was heard without; Sebastian and Tinette rushed down stairs, while Fräulein Rottenmeier followed them with a slow and stately step, for she knew that she was expected to receive Frau Sesemann.

Heidi had been told to go to her room and remain there until she was called, as the grand-

mamma would want to see Klara at once and would wish to find her alone. So she sat in one corner of her room repeating the new mode of address that she had been told to use. She had not dared to question the housekeeper about it, but had concluded that she must have misunderstood the lady, since she had never heard anyone addressed otherwise than as Frau or Madam with the name following. She determined to act accordingly, and before long Tinette appeared in the doorway to say in her usual short way:—

"Go into the study."

As Heidi opened the door of the study the grandmamma called out in a cheery voice:—

"Why, here is the little girl! Come here, my child, and let me look at you."

As Heidi stepped up to her the child said in a clear voice and very distinctly:—

"Good-evening, Madam Gracious!"

"Why, that is a new way!" said the grandmamma with a smile; "but why not? Is that what they say at home, in the Alps?"

"No; there is no one of that name at home," said Heidi very gravely.

"Nor here, either," was the grandmamma's laughing reply as she patted the child on the cheek. "That won't do for the nursery; I am simply 'grandmamma' to the little folks, and that is what

you may call me, too. You can remember that, can't you?"

"Oh yes, very well," Heidi assured her. "That is what I said at first."

"Oh, I see!" said the grandmamma with a merry nod of her head; she looked very closely at Heidi, and then nodded again from time to time. The child returned her gaze unwaveringly, looking straight into the grandmamma's eyes, where she must have seen something that was very kind and loving, for she felt at ease at once. Indeed, this new grandmamma seemed so charming to Heidi that the child could not take her eyes off of her. The old lady had such beautiful white hair on which rested a fluffy lace cap with two broad ends of ribbon hanging down from it; these were always moving gently as though a soft breeze were playing about the grandmamma all the time, and this was specially pleasing to Heidi.

"And what is your name, my child?" asked the grandmamma.

"My name is only Heidi; but now I am also called Adelheid, and so I will be careful to answer"—here Heidi's voice faltered a bit, for at that moment Fräulein Rottenmeier opened the door, and the child felt a little guilty, knowing that she still did not answer when this lady called "Adelheid" unexpectedly, for she had not yet got used to thinking of herself by that name.

"Frau Sesemann will agree with me that I had to choose a name that would not make one feel mortified to use it, if only on the servants' account."

"My dear Rottenmeier," replied the grandmamma, "if a child happens to be named Heidi, and is used to that name, I shall call her by it, and that's the end of it."

It annoyed the housekeeper very much that the old lady persisted in calling her by her name only without a preceding title of any kind; but there was no help for it, for the grandmamma had her own ways, which she followed, and there was little use in opposing them. Moreover, the old lady's five senses were quite as sharp as ever, and it did not take her long to learn what was going on in the house.

On the day after her arrival, while Klara was taking her usual after-dinner rest, the grandmamma seated herself in an easy-chair beside her, and closed her eyes for a few minutes; then she got up—for it did not take her long to get rested—and went into the dining-room; there was no one there. "She is taking a nap," said the old lady to herself as she went to the housekeeper's room and gave a sharp knock on the door. After a few moments it was opened by the lady within, who gave a little start when she saw her unexpected visitor.

"Where is the child usually at this time of day,

and what does she do? That is all I wanted to know," said Frau Sesemann.

"She sits in her room, where she might be doing something useful if she had the least desire to work; but you ought to hear Frau Sesemann, what mischievous things the child plans, and sometimes even carries out—things that can hardly be mentioned in polite society."

"That is just what I should do, I can assure you, if I had to sit all alone in a room like that child, and you might do as you liked about mentioning my performances in polite society. Now please get the child and bring her to my room; I want to give her some pretty books I brought with me."

"That is the worst of it—that is just the trouble," cried Fräulein Rottenmeier, wringing her hands. "What can she do with books? In all this time she has not yet learned her A B C's. It is quite impossible to teach that child a single new idea; the Herr Kandidat can tell you that. If the good man were not blessed with the patience of an angel he would long ago have given up teaching her."

"Indeed! That seems strange; the child does not look like one who cannot master the alphabet. Well, bring her to me now; for the present she can enjoy the pictures in the books."

The housekeeper was going to say more, but

Frau Sesemann had already turned, and was hurrying to her own room. She was surprised to hear of Heidi's dulness, and determined to learn more about it; but not from the tutor, although she had a high regard for that worthy gentleman because of his many good qualities. She always greeted him very cordially when they met, but instantly hurried away to another part of the room to avoid a conversation with him, for she found his mode of expressing himself a trifle wearisome.

Before long, Heidi came to the grandmamma's room and opened her eyes wide when she saw the beautiful colored pictures in the big books that were shown her. Suddenly, just after the grandmamma had turned a new page, the child gave a loud cry; with burning eyes she looked at the picture before her, and then burst into tears, sobbing convulsively. The grandmamma examined the picture; it represented a beautiful green pasture where all sorts of animals were grazing and nibbling at the green bushes. In the midst of them stood the shepherd leaning on a long staff as he watched the contented creatures. Everything in the picture had a golden light on it, for the sun was just sinking below the distant horizon.

The grandmamma took the child's hand in hers.

"Come, come, my dear," said she in the kindest of voices, "don't cry so, don't cry! The picture

made you think of something, didn't it? But see, here is a pretty story about it, and this evening I will tell it to you. And there are many more beautiful stories in the book, all of which can be read and then told to someone. Come, now, there is something we must talk about together. Dry your eyes, child; there! Now come and stand beside me, here where I can see you. There, that is right. Now we are happy again."

It was some time, however, before Heidi could cease sobbing; but the grandmamma gave her plenty of time to get over it, only encouraging her from time to time by saying: "There, now it is all over; now we will both be happy again." When she had at last succeeded in quieting the child, she said:—

"Now you must tell me something, my child. How do you get on with your lessons with the Herr Kandidat? Do you learn fast, and do you know much?"

"Oh, no!" answered Heidi with a sigh; "but I know that it can't be learned."

"What can't be learned, Heidi? What do you mean?"

"To read. It is too hard."

"You don't say so? And where did you learn this surprising bit of news?"

"Peter told me, and he knows; for he has tried

over and over again. But he cannot learn it; it is too hard."

"Well, he must be a queer Peter, that Peter of yours. But, you know, my dear, we mustn't believe everything that is told us; we must try for ourselves. Probably you do not put all your thoughts on what the Herr Kandidat tells you, and do not look at the letters very carefully."

"It is of no use," Heidi assured her in a tone of complete submission to the inevitable.

"Heidi," said the grandmamma, "now I will tell you something. You have not learned to read because you believed what Peter said. Now you are going to believe what I say, and I can promise you without fail that you will learn to read, and in a short time, too, just as many other children do that are like you and not like Peter. And now you shall hear what is to happen afterward, when you have learned to read. You saw the shepherd standing in the beautiful green pasture? As soon as you can read you shall have the book; then you can read the story about him, and it will be just as though some one were telling it to you—what he does with his sheep and goats, and what strange things happen to him. You would like to know all that, wouldn't you, Heidi?"

The child had listened intently and now said, as she drew a deep breath and her eyes shone with eagerness:—

"Oh, if I could only read!"

"Now it will come, and it will not take long either; I can see that, Heidi. And now we must see what Klara is doing. Come, we will take the pretty books with us," said the grandmamma, and with the child's hand in hers, the two went to the study together.

Ever since the day when Heidi started for home and was discovered and scolded for it by the housekeeper, and told how naughty and ungrateful it was of her to try to run away, and how fortunate it was that Herr Sesemann did not know of it, a great change had taken place in the child. She had learned that she could not go home when she wished, as her aunt had told her, but that, on the contrary, she must stay in Frankfort a long, long time, perhaps forever. She believed, too, that Herr Sesemann would consider it very ungrateful of her to wish to go home, and she concluded from this that Klara and her grandmamma would think likewise. And so the child dared not tell any one how she longed to go home, for she did not want the grandmamma, who was so kind to her, to be angry with her as the housekeeper had been that day.

But the weight that pressed on her heart grew heavier and heavier; she could not eat, and with every day she grew a little paler. At night, when

she went to bed, it was often a long, long time before she fell asleep; for when she was all alone, and it was so still about her, her mountain home rose so clearly before her, and she could see the green pasture with the sunshine on it and all the flowers round about; and when she finally did go to sleep she saw in her dreams the glowing peaks of Falkniss and the rosy snowfield on Cäsaplana. Then, when the morning came, and Heidi awoke with the glad thought that now she would run out of doors and stand before her grandfather's hut, she would suddenly remember that she was in her big white bed in Frankfort, far, far away from the home she might never see again. Then Heidi would bury her face in her pillow and cry a long time, but very softly for fear that some one might hear.

The child's unhappiness did not escape the grandmamma, but she let several days go by in the hope that Heidi would grow more cheerful. When she saw that this was not likely to be the case, but that, on the contrary, Heidi's eyes often showed traces of tears when she came from her room early in the morning, the grandmamma called the child to her room again one day, and placing Heidi before her, said with the utmost kindness:—

"Now tell me what ails you, Heidi? Is something troubling you?"

But it was just to this kind grandmamma that Heidi would not show her ingratitude, for fear that she might lose her friendship. So the child said sadly:—

"It is something that can't be told."

"No? Perhaps it might be told to Klara."

"Oh, no; it can't be told to anyone," Heidi replied with so despairing a look in her face that the grandmamma's heart ached for her.

"Come, my child," said the old lady, "I will tell you something. When we have a sorrow of which we cannot speak to anyone on earth we must tell it to the dear God in heaven and ask Him to help us, for there is no sorrow that He cannot take away. You know that, do you not, my child? You pray every night to the dear God in heaven and thank Him for all His goodness and ask Him to protect you from all that is evil, do you not?"

"No, I never do that," was the child's answer.

"Have you never prayed, Heidi? And don't you know how to pray?"

"My first grandmother taught me to pray, but that was long ago, and I have forgotten."

"There, my little Heidi, that is why you are so sad, because you know of no one who can help you. Just think what a blessing it must be to those whose hearts are heavy with some great sorrow to know that at any moment they can go to

the dear God and tell Him all that troubles them, and ask Him to help them when there is no one on earth who can. He can help us in every trouble, and give us what will make us glad again."

A look of hope suddenly came into Heidi's eyes as she said:—

"Can we tell Him everything, everything?"

"Everything, Heidi, everything."

Drawing her hand out of the grandmamma's, Heidi said eagerly:—

"May I go?"

"To be sure, to be sure, my child," was the answer.

Heidi ran off, and hurrying to her room sat down on the footstool, and, folding her little hands, told the dear God all that pressed upon her heart and made her so sad, and begged Him earnestly to help her, and let her go home to her grandfather.

About a week later the tutor expressed a desire to pay his respects to Frau Sesemann, as he wished to tell her of a most remarkable occurrence. He was shown to her room at once, where Frau Sesemann met him at the door with outstretched hands saying:—

"My dear Herr Kandidat, I am glad to see you; pray be seated; here," and she drew a chair for him. "Now tell me, what brings you to me? Nothing bad, I hope; no complaints?"

"Quite the contrary, gracious madam," the tutor began; "something for which I had almost ceased to hope has come to pass, although, to judge from what has gone before, no one could have foreseen it, for according to all reasonable suppositions it was impossible. Nevertheless it has taken place, and in the most wonderful manner, and contrary to all that could be expected"—

"Perhaps the child, Heidi, has learned to read, Herr Kandidat?" Frau Sesemann interrupted him.

Speechless with astonishment, the tutor could only stare at Frau Sesemann.

"It is most surprising," he began at last; "after this young girl had failed to master even so much as the A B C's in spite of all my careful explanations and special efforts, she has now—when I had just decided to cease attempting the unattainable, and to place before her no more than the simple letters themselves—she has, so to speak, learned to read over night; and, moreover, reads with a correctness which I have seldom found in a beginner. Almost as surprising to me is the fact that you, gracious madam, should have suspected that this remote possibility had become a reality."

"Many wonderful things happen in a lifetime," replied Frau Sesemann; "even the fortunate combination of two circumstances, such as a new desire

to learn and a new method of teaching; neither is to be regretted, Herr Kandidat. Let us rejoice that the child has learned so much, and at the same time hope for continued improvement."

So saying, Frau Sesemann accompanied the tutor to the door and then hastened to the study to assure herself that the welcome news he had brought was indeed true.

There sat Heidi reading a story to Klara, evidently to her own great astonishment, and with an increasing eagerness to enter the new world which had so suddenly been opened to her by means of the little black letters before her—a world of people and things that grew more and more real as they were woven into wonderful stories of great interest.

That evening when Heidi came to supper, she saw the big book with the beautiful pictures lying beside her plate, and as she looked inquiringly at the grandmamma, the kind old lady said with a friendly nod:—

"Yes, yes, it is yours now."

"Mine for always? Even when I go home?" asked Heidi growing quite rosy with pleasure.

"Yes, yours always," the grandammma assured her. "To-morrow we will begin to read it."

"But you aren't going home, not for many years to come, Heidi," exclaimed Klara. "Now that

grandmamma is going away so soon, I shall need you more than ever."

Before Heidi could go to sleep that night she had to take another look at her beautiful book; from that day forth her greatest pleasure was to sit poring over it, reading again and again the stories that told about the pretty colored pictures. When in the evening the grandmamma said: "Now Heidi will read us a story," the child was happy, for she could read quite easily now, and when she read the stories aloud they seemed more beautiful and real to her; and, as she read, the grandmamma explained so many things and added much that the children were glad to hear.

The picture at which Heidi looked oftenest and longest was the one that showed the green pasture with the shepherd standing in the midst of his flock, leaning contentedly on his long staff, for as yet he was with his father's well-kept flocks, watching and caring for the merry sheep and goats because he loved them. But in the next picture he had run away from his father's house, and was far from home tending swine, and looked quite thin, for he had nothing but husks to eat. In this picture there was no golden sunshine as in the other, but only a gray and gloomy sky. But there was a third picture to the story, and in it the old father was coming out of his house with out-

stretched arms to welcome his penitent son now returning to him in fear and trembling, clothed in rags, and wasted with hunger.

That was Heidi's favorite story, and she read it over and over again, aloud or to herself, never growing weary of the explanations which the grandmamma gave the children. There were many other charming stories in the book and, in reading them and looking at the pictures, the time passed quickly, and the day which the grandmamma had set for her journey home was not far distant now.

CHAPTER XI

HEIDI BOTH GAINS AND LOSES

THROUGHOUT her visit the grandmamma made it her habit to take a little nap as she sat beside Klara when the little invalid was lying down for her after-dinner rest, and Fräulein Rottenmeier had mysteriously disappeared, probably to refresh her over-taxed nerves. But after a few minutes the old lady was on her feet again, and then she always called Heidi to her room, where she talked with the child and showed her many ways in which to amuse and employ herself. The grandmamma had brought a number of pretty dolls with her, and she showed Heidi how to make dresses and aprons for these little people; in this way the child learned to sew quite neatly and could soon make the prettiest doll's dresses and cloaks out of the beautiful bright-colored pieces which the grandmamma always had at hand. Now that Heidi could read, she often read some of the stories in her big book aloud to the grandmamma, and this was the child's greatest pleasure, for the oftener she read the stories the more she loved them. The child shared all the joys and sorrows of the people about whom she read, so that

they seemed like real friends whom she was always glad to meet again. And yet Heidi never looked really light-hearted and happy, and the old merry look that her eyes had lost never came back to them.

It was now the last week of the grandmamma's visit in Frankfort. She had just called Heidi to her room, for it was the time in which Klara rested. When Heidi entered with her big book under her arm, the grandmamma beckoned her to come nearer; taking the book from her and laying it aside, she drew the child toward her, and said:—

"Now tell me, Heidi, why are you not happy? Is your heart still heavy with the same trouble?"

"Yes," nodded Heidi.

"And have you told it to the dear God?"

"Yes."

"And do you pray every day that God will make it right and you will be happy again?"

"Oh, no; I never pray any more."

"What is that, Heidi? What do I hear? And why do you not pray any more?"

"It is of no use; the dear God did not hear me; and I can understand very well why He didn't," the child continued with some agitation, "for when all the many, many people in Frankfort pray to Him in the evening, He cannot listen to all

of them, and I am sure He never heard me."

"Indeed! And why are you so sure of that?"

"Every evening, for many, many weeks, I prayed the same prayer, but the dear God did not answer it."

"Yes, yes, my child; but that is not the way to look at it. You see, the dear God is a kind father to us all, and He always knows what is good for us, much better than do we ourselves. And so, when we ask Him for something that is not good for us to have, He does not give us that, but something else which is much better for us, provided we continue to pray earnestly to Him. You see, my child, that for which you prayed was not best for you just now; but our dear Father in heaven did hear you, for He can see us all, and listen to us all, at one and the same time, for He is the good God and not a human being like you and me. And, since He knew very well what was best for you, He thought to himself: 'Yes, some time Heidi shall have that for which she asks, but not until it is best for her, and she can be perfectly happy over it; for, if I do what she asks of me now, the day will come when she will see that it would have been better, after all, if I had not done so; and then she will cry and say: "Oh, if only the dear God had not given me what I begged of Him, for it was not as good for me as I thought." '

"And now, while the dear God was looking down at you to see whether you were trusting Him and coming to Him every day to pray and tell Him all your troubles, you turned away and lost your trust in Him, never praying, and forgetting Him altogether. Now, can't you see that when people do so, and the dear Lord never hears their voices among those who pray to Him, it is only right that he should forget them and let them go their own way. But when they come to grief in that way, and then cry and say: 'There is no one to help me!' then no one feels sorry for them, but every one says: 'It is your own fault, for did you not turn away from the dear God who alone could have helped you?'

"Now will you be like these people, Heidi? Or will you go back to the dear Lord and beg Him to forgive you for turning away from Him; and hereafter pray every day, and trust Him to bring everything right for you in the end, so that your heart may be light again?"

Heidi had listened attentively, and the grandmamma's words had sunk deep into her heart, for the child had the greatest confidence in her.

"I will go right away and ask the dear God to forgive me, and I'll never forget Him again," said the penitent child.

"That is right, Heidi; and you may be sure He

will help you when the right time comes," said the grandmamma encouragingly as Heidi ran off to her room, where she prayed earnestly and penitently, begging the dear God not to forget her, but to look down upon her in forgiveness.

The day when the grandmamma must depart came all too soon; it was a sad day for Klara and Heidi, but the kind old lady did not allow them to realize it, but managed to make it seem more like a holiday up to the very moment when she stepped into the carriage and was driven away. Then a silence and feeling of emptiness fell upon the house, as though everything had come to an end; and for the rest of the day Klara and Heidi sat together like two lost children, not knowing what to do next.

On the following day, when the lessons were over and the hour which the children usually spent together had come, Heidi appeared in the doorway with her big book under her arm, and said:—

"Now I will always read to you, always, if you like, Klara?"

Klara very gladly agreed to this, and Heidi entered upon her newly-assumed duty with great eagerness. But the pleasure did not last long; for hardly had Heidi begun a new story which told of a dying grandmother, when she burst into tears and cried out: "Oh, now the grandmother is

dead!" for all that the child read seemed real to her, and she now believed that Peter's grandmother had died. Sobbing louder and louder, she cried piteously:—

"Now the grandmother is dead, and I can never go to her again, and she has not had one little white roll!"

Klara tried to explain to Heidi that the grandmother of the story was not Peter's grandmother, but an entirely different one; but even after she had succeeded in convincing Heidi of this, the agitated child continued to sob, and could not be comforted, for now the idea had entered her mind that while she was so far away the grandmother might die, and her grandfather, too, and that, when at last after many years she went back to her mountain home, she would find it silent and deserted, and, standing before its closed doors, know that she would never again see those she loved.

In the meantime, Fräulein Rottenmeier had entered the room, and had overheard Klara's efforts to explain to Heidi the mistake that she had made. Finally, when Heidi did not stop crying, she turned to the children with evident impatience, and said sternly:—

"Adelheid, that will do; stop your foolish crying. I will tell you one thing; if you ever give

way to such an outbreak again during your reading, I will take the book away and never give it back to you."

That made no impression. Heidi grew white with terror, for the book was her greatest treasure. Hastily drying her eyes she swallowed and choked down her sobs with all her might, allowing not a sound to escape her. The housekeeper found no occasion to repeat her threat, for Heidi never cried again, no matter what she read. At times, however, her efforts to control herself and not cry aloud were so great that Klara would look at her in astonishment and say:—

"Heidi, you are making the most frightful faces I ever saw!"

But the "frightful faces" made no noise, and so were not noticed by Fräulein Rottenmeier, and when Heidi had mastered one of her attacks of desperate homesickness everything went smoothly again for a while, and no one had been disturbed by so much as a sound.

But the child lost her appetite and looked so pale and thin that Sebastian could not bear to see her so, and when she declined even the most tempting dishes he had to offer, and would not so much as taste them, he felt so grieved that he would whisper coaxingly: "Take some of this, Mamsell; it is excellent. Oh, not so little; take a good spoonful;

now another." But it was of no use; Heidi scarcely ate anything; and when she closed her eyes at night her grandfather's hut with all the beauty around it rose so plainly before her, that, overcome by her great longing, she would bury her face in her pillow and cry very softly so that no one might hear her.

Thus a long time passed in which Heidi scarcely knew whether it was winter or summer, for the high walls with their many windows always looked the same, and they were all that could be seen from the windows of the Sesemann house, and Heidi never went out of doors except when Klara felt especially well; then they would take a drive, but only a short one, for the little invalid could not endure to sit long in a carriage. And so they always turned homeward very soon and never got beyond brick walls and stone pavements, but always drove through handsome wide streets where there were houses and people in plenty, but no grass and flowers, no pine trees and mountains. And it was for these dear and familiar objects that Heidi longed more and more with every passing day, so that now the mere sight of their names in print awakened memories and longings that brought her near to an outbreak of despairing grief which it took all her strength to conquer in silence.

In this way the fall and the winter had passed, and now the sun shone so dazzlingly on the white walls opposite the Sesemann house that Heidi knew the time must be near when Peter would again drive his flock up to the mountain pasture, where by day the golden rockroses glittered in the sunshine, and at evening all the mountains round about glowed in fiery beauty.

And Heidi crept into one corner of her lonely chamber, and, with both hands pressed against her eyes that she might not see the sunlight on the opposite wall, sat there motionless, battling in silence with the terrible homesickness in her heart, until Klara sent for her again.

CHAPTER XII

A GHOST IN THE SESEMANN HOUSE

FOR some days Fräulein Rottenmeier had been going about the house with a silent and thoughtful air. At dusk, when she passed from one room to another, or went through the long halls, she looked about her continually, peering into every corner, or casting a furtive glance backward as though she feared some one were creeping up behind her to give her dress a twitch.

Moreover, it was only into the rooms that were in constant use that she still went alone; if she had an errand in the upper stories, where the handsomely furnished guest chambers were situated, or, worse still, if she found it necessary to go down to the first floor on which was the mysterious great drawing-room where every footstep woke strange echoes, and where the worthy Herr Councillors in their high white collars looked steadfastly down at her from their frames on the walls, she always called Tinette, bidding her to come with her in case something had to be carried up or down.

Tinette, on her part, did precisely the same; if a duty required her to go to the upper or lower floors she called Sebastian, and told him to come

with her as there might be something to carry that was too heavy for her. Strange to say, Sebastian did exactly the same; whenever he was sent to a remote part of the house he went after Johann telling him to come too, as it might require two to fetch what was wanted. And, though there was never anything to carry or to do that one could not have easily done alone, yet each one responded to the other's call most willingly, as if he in turn expected to ask a like service. While matters went on thus upstairs, below, in the kitchen, the old cook who had been in the house for many years went about among her pots and kettles sighing and shaking her head as she muttered:—

"To think that I should live to see such a thing!"

There was something mysterious and uncanny going on in the Sesemann house. Every morning when the servants came down stairs they found the front door standing wide open; but nowhere was anyone to be seen who could in any way be connected with the strange occurrence. On the first days that it was found so, every room and closet in the great house was examined to discover what had been stolen, for it was supposed that a thief had secreted himself in the house and had made off with his booty during the night. But nothing was found to be gone; in the whole house not a thing was missing.

At night the front door was not only doubly locked, but bolted beside. But all to no purpose; the next morning it stood wide open. No matter how early the excitement and curiosity of the servants brought them down stairs, they always found the door wide open although the entire neighborhood still lay wrapped in sleep, and all the windows and doors in the other houses were tightly closed.

Finally Johann and Sebastian plucked up courage and at the housekeeper's earnest entreaties prepared to pass the night in a room adjoining the great drawing-room, from there to observe what might happen. Fräulein Rottenmeier brought forth a number of Herr Sesemann's weapons and gave them to Sebastian together with a light luncheon, so that her defenders might have good cheer as well as good arms, should they be needed.

On the appointed evening the two men took their places and at once began to refresh themselves with the luncheon which at first made them talkative and then very sleepy, whereupon they both settled down in their comfortable chairs in silence. As the old tower clock struck twelve Sebastian roused himself and called to his companion. Johann was not easily awakened, however, but at each call only turned his head from one side of the chair to the other, and slept on. But Sebastian

was listening intently, and he was quite wide awake by this time. Not a sound was to be heard; even the noises of the street had died out; Sebastian did not go to sleep again, for he began to feel very ill at ease in the great stillness all about him, and his voice did not rise above a whisper as he called to Johann and shook him from time to time. Finally, after the old clock had struck one, Johann waked up and realized why it was that he was sitting there, instead of being comfortably asleep in his bed. He jumped up with a sudden feeling of bravery, and said:—

"Well, Sebastian, let us go out and see how matters stand. You aren't afraid, are you? Come on, you can keep behind me."

Johann now pushed open the door which had not been tightly closed; he was instantly met by a cold gust of air that came sweeping through the front door which stood wide open, and at the same moment the light he carried was blown out. Johann sprang back into the room; in his haste he nearly upset Sebastian who was close behind him, and, as he pushed him farther back into the room, he slammed the door shut and quickly turned the key as far as it would go. Then, in great haste, he drew forth a match and relit his lamp.

Sebastian hardly knew what had happened; following so close behind Johann, he had not felt the

cold draft of air. But when the light revealed to him his companion's face, he gave a cry of alarm, for it was as white as chalk, and the man was trembling like an aspen leaf.

"What is it? What did you see out there?" he asked anxiously.

"The front door was wide open," panted Johann, "and a white figure was gliding upstairs. Look, Sebastian! It was like this—whish—and it was gone."

Cold shivers crept up Sebastian's back as he listened. Then the two men drew their chairs close together and sat there without stirring until the bright daylight came in at the windows, and the street below had grown quite lively again. Then they left the room together, and, closing the front door which was still open, they went upstairs to report the events of the night to the housekeeper. That lady did not keep them waiting a moment, for her anxiety with regard to what they would have to tell her had not allowed her to sleep very long.

As soon as she heard what had happened, she sat down and wrote Herr Sesemann a letter the like of which he had never received before. In it she declared that her fingers were almost paralyzed with fear, and called upon Herr Sesemann to pack up at once and return to his home, where the most

unheard of things were taking place. This was followed by a statement of the night's occurrence, together with the announcement that the front door was found wide open every morning, and that, therefore, the life of everyone in the house was nightly in danger, and that no one could foresee what dreadful consequences might result from this horrible mystery.

Herr Sesemann replied that it was impossible for him to leave his business at such short notice. The ghost-story, he said, surprised him exceedingly, and he hoped that by this time there was no longer any cause for anxiety. However, should the disturbance continue, he advised Fräulein Rottenmeier to write to his mother and ask her to come to Frankfort, for he had no doubt that she would get rid of the ghosts in short measure, and so effectively that they would not very soon venture to disturb his house again.

The housekeeper was by no means pleased with the tone of this letter; the writer did not seem to regard the matter seriously enough. However, she wrote to Frau Sesemann at once, but found little to comfort her in the reply from that quarter, while, on the contrary, some of the remarks it contained were most irritating. Frau Sesemann wrote that she had no desire to take the long journey from Holstein just because the housekeeper

was afraid of ghosts. Moreover, no ghosts had ever before been seen in the Sesemann house, and if there were any flitting about there now, she had no doubt they were to be found among the living, and the housekeeper must try to catch them by herself; if she could not succeed, she must call the night watchman to her aid.

But Fräulein Rottenmeier was determined not to spend her days in terror any longer, and she knew a way by which to get relief. Up to this time she had not mentioned the ghostly visitor to the children, for fear that they would be afraid to be left alone for a single minute either by day or night, and this might lead to serious inconvenience for herself. Now, however, she went straight to the study where the two children were sitting together, and in a low and awe-struck voice began to tell them of the mysterious nightly visitor. The instant Klara heard of it, she screamed with terror, and declared that her papa must be sent for at once, and that Fräulein Rottenmeier must sleep in the room with her, so that she might not be left alone for a single moment; and Heidi, too, must not be left alone, for the ghost might come to her and do her harm. She proposed that they all three sleep in the same room and keep a bright light burning all night; that Tinette sleep in the next room, and that Sebastian and Johann spend

the night in the adjoining hall to give the alarm and frighten the ghost away should it venture upstairs.

Klara was so excited that it took the housekeeper a long time to quiet her. She promised to write to Herr Sesemann at once, and to have her bed moved into Klara's room, and never to leave her alone. They could not all sleep in one room, she said, but if Adelheid was afraid, she would tell Tinette to put up her bed in the child's room. But Heidi was more afraid of Tinette than she was of ghosts, for she had never heard of them, and at once declared that she did not fear the ghost and was quite willing to sleep alone in her room.

The housekeeper now hurried to her task and wrote Herr Sesemann, telling him that the mysterious occurrence, which was repeated every night, was having so serious an effect on his daughter's delicate constitution that the worst consequences were to be feared; that she herself had known sudden attacks of epilepsy or St. Vitus's dance to follow similar states of excitement, and that his little daughter was therefore in great danger so long as the present state of terror continued in the house.

This had the desired effect. Two days later Herr Sesemann stood at his front door and gave the bell so vigorous a pull that everyone in the house

rushed into the hall, each one staring at the others, for they all believed nothing less than that the ghost had now grown bold enough to begin his mischievous tricks even before nightfall. Sebastian took the precaution to look down through the half-closed shutter of an upper window, but at that moment the bell received another violent pull which convinced everyone that a human hand must be on the knob.

Sebastian had recognized the hand; he rushed from the room, and head over heels down stairs, where he was fortunate enough to alight on his feet; then he threw the door open. The master of the house passed him with only a short nod and went up to his daughter's room without delay. Klara greeted her father with a loud cry of joy, and when he saw his little girl looking so happy and in no wise changed, the frown on his forehead gradually disappeared, and his face grew more and more cheerful as he heard from his daughter's own lips that she was quite as well as usual, and was so glad to have him with her again; she even assured him that she liked the ghost that was roaming about the house very well now, since it had been the means of bringing her papa home.

"And how does the ghost conduct himself now-a-days, Fräulein Rottenmeier?" asked Herr Sesemann with a tell-tale twitching at the corners of his mouth.

"Really, Herr Sesemann," replied the housekeeper, "it is no jesting matter. I am quite sure that by to-morrow morning you yourself will not be inclined to laugh. What is going on here at present suggests the thought of some bloody deed that must have been committed in the house long years ago and have been kept secret."

"Indeed! Well, I have never heard of it, and I must beg that no suspicions be cast upon my very respectable ancestors. And now will you please send Sebastian to the dining-room; I wish to speak with him there alone."

So saying, Herr Sesemann crossed the hall into the opposite room. It had not escaped him that Sebastian and the housekeeper were not very fond of each other, and he had his suspicions.

Presently Sebastian appeared at the door; his master beckoned him to enter, and called out:—

"Come here, you rascal, and tell me the truth. Haven't you been playing ghost for Fräulein Rottenmeier's benefit? Eh?"

"No, upon my honor, Herr Sesemann; you must not think that. I do not feel very comfortable about the ghost myself," replied Sebastian with unmistakable candor.

"Well, if that is the case, I will show you and that very courageous Johann what ghosts look like by daylight to-morrow morning. You ought to

be ashamed of yourself, Sebastian! A strong young fellow like you to run away from ghosts! Now go at once to my old friend, Dr. Classen; present my compliments and tell him to come to see me without fail at nine o'clock to-night. Say that I came from Paris for the special purpose of consulting him, and that it is so serious a case that he will have to sit up with me all night, and must come prepared accordingly. Do you understand, Sebastian?"

"Certainly, sir, certainly! You can depend on me to deliver your message as you wish."

Sebastian went on his errand, and Herr Sesemann returned to his little daughter to relieve her of any remaining fear of spectres which he would present in their true light in the morning.

At exactly nine o'clock, after the children had gone to bed and the housekeeper had retired to her room, the doctor appeared. His gray hair was brushed back from a face still fresh and youthful, out of which looked a pair of alert but kindly eyes. He appeared somewhat anxious as he entered, but as soon as the greetings were said he burst into a merry laugh, and slapping his friend on the shoulder, said:—

"Well, well, for a man who needs to be sat up with all night, you look pretty comfortable, old fellow!"

"Oh, not so fast, old man, not so fast!" retorted Herr Sesemann; "the one for whom you are to sit up will look a good deal worse than I do when we have caught him."

"Then there is a sick person in the house after all, and one that must be caught, besides!"

"Worse, much worse, Doctor! There is a ghost in the house; the place is haunted."

The doctor laughed aloud.

"Pretty sympathy, this, Doctor!" Herr Sesemann continued. "'Tis a pity Fräulein Rottenmeier isn't here to enjoy it! She is convinced that an ancient Sesemann is wandering about doing penance for some dark deed done ages ago."

"And where did she meet him?" asked the doctor still much amused.

Herr Seseman now told his friend the whole story, and that the front door was still found open every morning, as all the servants testified. Then he added that, to be prepared for any emergency, he had placed two trusty revolvers in the room where they were to spend the night; for he regarded the affair either as an ill-chosen practical joke that some friend of the servants was playing for the purpose of frightening them while the master of the house was away—in this case a little wholesome fright, such as would result from a shot into the air would be an excellent thing—or else it was the

work of thieves who hoped in this way to give the impression that there were ghosts about, so that the servants would not dare to venture out of their rooms, and so leave them to plunder unhindered later on; if this were the case, a trusty weapon would not come amiss.

During this conversation the gentlemen had descended the stairs, and now entered the room in which Johann and Sebastian had kept their watch. On the table stood some light refreshments which might be most welcome if the night was to be spent here; close by lay the two revolvers, while two silver candelabra shed a brilliant light through the room, for Herr Sesemann had no mind to await the ghost in semi-darkness.

The door was nearly closed, so that the light might not shine into the hall and so frighten the ghost away. Then the gentlemen made themselves comfortable in two easy chairs, and found so much to talk about that, together with a little occasional refreshment, the time passed so quickly that when the clock struck twelve, they could hardly believe that it was so late.

"The ghost has got wind of us, and will not come to-night," said the doctor.

"Patience, old friend, patience! It doesn't come until one o'clock, they say," replied Herr Sesemann, and the conversation was resumed.

It struck one. The silence about them remained unbroken, for even the noises in the street had ceased entirely. Suddenly the doctor raised his finger.

"P'st, Sesemann! Don't you hear something?"

Both men listened intently. Softly, but very distinctly, they heard the bolt drawn back, then the key turned twice in the lock, and finally the door swing open. Herr Sesemann grasped his revolver.

"You aren't afraid, are you?" asked the doctor, rising as he spoke.

"Caution is always best," whispered Herr Sesemann, as he took one of the candelabra in his left hand, and with the revolver in his right, followed the doctor, who preceded him, also provided with candelabrum and revolver. In this way they went softly to the door and out into the hall.

Through the front door, which was wide open, the pale moonlight fell upon a white figure standing motionless on the threshold.

"Who are you?" thundered the doctor in tones that rang through the entire length of the hall, as both men, with lights and weapons, stepped up to the figure. It turned and gave a low cry. With bare feet and clad only in her little white night gown, Heidi stood before them, looking up with dazed eyes at the bright lights and weapons, and



A white figure standing motionless on the threshold.

trembling and shaking like a leaf in the wind. The gentlemen exchanged a glance of astonishment.

"I do believe, Sesemann, it is your little water-carrier!" exclaimed the doctor.

"Child, what does this mean?" asked Herr Sesemann. "What were you going to do? Why did you come down here?"

With her face blanched as white as snow Heidi stood there, and said in a voice that could scarcely be heard:—

"I don't know."

The doctor now stepped forward, saying:—

"Sesemann, this is a case for my profession. Go and make yourself comfortable in your arm-chair while I take the child back to where she belongs."

So saying he laid his revolver on the floor, took the trembling child by the hand and went toward the stairs with her. "Never fear, never fear," he said cheerily as they went up. "You needn't be afraid; there was no harm in what you did. Have good courage!"

When they had arrived in Heidi's room the doctor set his light on the table, lifted the child in his arms and laid her gently in her bed, carefully tucking in the covers around her. Then he sat down beside the bed and waited until she had grown a little calmer and had ceased to tremble in every limb.

Taking the child's hand in his he said soothingly:—

"There, now we are all right again; now just tell me where you wanted to go."

"Really, I didn't want to go anywhere," Heidi assured him. "And I didn't go down there at all. I just was there."

"Oh, that is the way it was? And did you dream during the night? Do you remember anything that you saw or heard?"

"Oh, yes; I dream every night, and always the same. In my dream I am at home with grandfather, and I hear the pine trees sigh, and I know that up in the sky the beautiful stars are shining so bright. Then I run to the door as fast as I can and look out, and it is so beautiful! But when I wake up I am always back in Frankfort again." Heidi could scarcely finish, for she was struggling with the lump in her throat again.

"Hm! and have you a pain anywhere? In your head, or in your back?"

"Oh, no; only a feeling here, as though a great stone were lying there."

"Hm! just as though you had eaten something that you would like to get rid of again, eh?"

"No, not like that. Only such a heavy feeling, as though I should like to cry very hard."

"Oh, so? And do you cry hard then?"

"Oh, no, I am not allowed to do that. Fräulein Rottenmeier forbade it."

"Then you swallow it down to the other big lump, don't you? I understand. Well, you like to be in Frankfort, don't you?"

"Oh, yes," was the low reply, but it sounded more as though the contrary were true.

"Hm! and where did you live with your grandfather?"

"Always up on the Alm."

"Indeed! Well, it cannot be very amusing up there; it is rather dull, isn't it?"

"Oh, no! It is so beautiful! so beautiful!" Heidi could say no more, for the memory, together with the excitement she had just passed through, and her long restrained desire to weep proved too much for the child's strength; the tears rushed to her eyes and she burst into loud and convulsive sobs.

The doctor rose; laying the child's head gently back against her pillow, he said:—

"There, cry a little while longer; that will do no harm; and then go to sleep, go quietly and contentedly to sleep, for to-morrow it will all be made right."

Then he left the room.

When he had rejoined his friend who was anxiously awaiting his return, he took the chair opposite to him and said:—

"Sesemann, your little protégée walks in her

sleep; quite unconsciously she has gone down every night and, as the supposed ghost, has frightened your servants out of their wits. Moreover, the child is being consumed by homesickness so that she is hardly more than a little skeleton now, and will soon be one unless instant help is at hand. For the first trouble and the extremely nervous condition consequent upon it, there is but one remedy, namely that the child be sent back to her native mountain air at once; for the second trouble there is also but one medicine, namely, the same as for the first. The child must therefore start for home to-morrow. That is my only prescription."

Herr Sesemann had arisen and in great excitement was pacing the floor. When the doctor had ended, he exclaimed:—

"Walks in her sleep! Ill! Homesick! Reduced to a skeleton in my house! All in my house and no one noticed or prevented it! And you, Doctor! You expect me to send a child, who came to my house rosy and well, back to her grandfather, ill and thin as a skeleton! No, Doctor, you must not ask it! I cannot do it! Take the child in hand and cure her. Do whatever you think best, only make her well and strong. Then she shall go back as soon as she likes; but first you must cure her."

"Sesemann," replied the doctor very gravely,

"consider what you are doing. This is not an illness that can be cured with pills and powders. The child's constitution is not robust; however, if you send her back immediately into the bracing mountain air to which she is used, she will get entirely well again; if not—you do not want her to go back to her grandfather an incurable invalid, or perhaps never at all, do you?"

Herr Sesemann came to a sudden and startled halt before his friend:—

"If that is the case, Doctor, then there is, as you say, only one way, and we must act at once."

With these words he took the doctor's arm, and together the two friends paced up and down the room as they discussed the matter further. They must have passed a long time in this way, for when the doctor said that it was time for him to go, and the front door was thrown open, this time by the master of the house himself, the light of early morning came streaming in.

CHAPTER XIII

UP THE ALM ON A SUMMER EVENING

STILL greatly agitated, Herr Sesemann ran upstairs and with a firm tread went to the housekeeper's room, where he rapped so loudly upon the door that the lady started out of her sleep with a cry of alarm. Then she heard the master's voice without asking her to hurry and come to the dining-room as soon as possible as preparations for a sudden journey were to be made.

Fräulein Rottenmeier looked at her watch; it was just half-past-four. Never in all her life had she arisen at such an unheard-of hour. What could have happened? Curiosity and anxious expectation so excited her that she picked up everything wrong end first, and searched with nervous haste all over the room for what she had already put on, so that she made but little progress in her toilet.

Meanwhile Herr Sesemann was walking down the hall, giving every bell that communicated with a servant's room a sharp pull, with the result that in each of the several rooms a terrified figure leaped out of bed and scrambled head-long into some clothes; for each and every one of them be-

lieved nothing less than that the ghost had caught the master, and this was his call for help. One after the other they came down stairs, each looking more terrified than the preceding one, and presenting themselves before the master who, brisk and bright, was walking up and down in the dining-room, looking in no way the worse for his meeting with the ghost.

Johann was at once sent to get the horses and carriage ready to be brought to the door later on; Tinette was told to wake Heidi and dress her for the journey; Sebastian was despatched to the house where Heidi's Aunt Dete was in service and told to bring her back with him. The housekeeper had meanwhile completed her toilet, and now appeared quite correctly dressed, with the exception of her headdress which she had put on wrong side to, so that from a distance she looked as though her head had been turned, bringing her face over her back. Herr Sesemann ascribed this surprising appearance to her unusually early rising, and proceeded immediately to the business in hand. He told her that a trunk must be procured at once, and into it must be packed all the clothing of the little Swiss girl—for so he always called Heidi whose name he found a little difficult to remember —together with a large part of his daughter's wardrobe, so that the child might have something

respectable to take home with her. "But," he added, "it must be begun at once and finished without delay."

The housekeeper was so overcome with surprise that she stood as though rooted to the ground, staring at Herr Sesemann. She had expected to hear a blood-curdling ghost-story, his experience of the night, which she was by no means disinclined to hear in the bright light of the day; instead, she had received these highly prosaic and very inconvenient orders. It had come too suddenly for her to overcome her surprise at once, and she remained standing speechless before Herr Sesemann, as though expecting something further. But he had no intention of explaining matters, but left the lady standing where she was, and went to his daughter's room.

As he had supposed, the unusual stir in the house had waked her and she was listening in every diretion to learn what was going on. Her father seated himself at her bedside and told her how the ghost story had ended, and that, in the doctor's opinion, Heidi's condition was serious; that she would probably walk farther and farther in her sleep; perhaps even climb to the roof, and so endanger her life. He had therefore decided to send the child home forthwith, as he did not wish to feel responsible for her any longer; his little

daughter must accept the inevitable, since she could herself see that no other course was possible.

It was a most painful surprise to Klara, and she suggested a number of ways to solve the difficulty and yet keep her little friend with her; but her father remained firm and promised to take Klara to Switzerland during the next summer if she would be reasonable and not grieve. So Klara submitted cheerfully to what could not be helped, but asked in return that Heidi's trunk be brought to her room to be packed, so that she might put in whatever she pleased. To this her father not only gave his ready consent, but urged her to get together a goodly outfit for the child.

Meanwhile Aunt Dete had arrived and was standing without in the anteroom in a state of great expectancy; for to be summoned at so unusual an hour must mean that something extraordinary was about to happen. Herr Sesemann stepped into the anteroom and told her of Heidi's condition, and asked her to take the child home at once, that very day. Dete looked very much disappointed; this was not what she had expected. She remembered very well, too, that the Alm-Uncle's last words had been that he never wished to see her again; she had left the child with him once, and then had taken her away, and it hardly seemed advisable to Dete to go to him now and ask him to take the

child again. It did not take her long to decide what to do; she began at once to say very glibly that she regretted exceedingly not to be able to go with the child that day; and on the next it would be still less possible, and for some days after that she could not ask to be excused owing to the work planned for that time, and after that it would be quite impossible.

Herr Sesemann understood the meaning of these excuses very well, and dismissed Dete without any further discussion. He then summoned Sebastian, and told him to make immediate preparations for a journey, as he was to go with Heidi as far as Basle that day, and on the next take her home; he was to return at once, as there was no message to deliver, for Herr Sesemann would explain everything in a letter to Heidi's grandfather.

"But there is one important matter, Sebastian," said Herr Sesemann in conclusion, "that you must see to most conscientiously. The name I have written here on my card is that of a hotel in Basle at which I am well known. By showing my card to the proprietor you will secure a good room for the child; you can look out for yourself. Before the child goes to her room you are to fasten all the windows in it so securely that it will require the greatest strength to open them. After she has gone to bed you must lock the door from the out-

side, for the child walks in her sleep, and may meet with a terrible accident if she wanders about a strange house in search of the front door. Do you understand?"

"Ah! Oh! That was it, was it!" exclaimed the astonished Sebastian, for he suddenly saw the ghost story in a new light.

"Yes, that was it? And you are a miserable coward, and Johann is another, as you may tell him for me; and all of you deserve to be the laughing stock of the town."

With this, Herr Sesemann went to his room to write a letter to the Alm-Uncle. Sebastian remained standing in the middle of the room with a sheepish look on his face, muttering to himself:—

"If only I hadn't let that cowardly Johann drag me back into the room! I would have followed the little white figure if I had seen it, I am sure!" for now that the bright sunlight was falling into every corner of the room, he was brave enough.

Meanwhile Heidi was standing in her room dressed in her little Sunday frock, waiting for what might come next, for she had no idea what was going to happen. Tinette had waked her, taken her clothes from the closet and helped her put them on, but had not spoken a word; for she never talked to the low-born little Heidi, as she considered herself far above her in station.

When breakfast was served, Herr Sesemann entered the dining-room, carrying his letter in his hand, and asked:—

"Where is the child?"

Heidi was called, and as she stepped up to Herr Sesemann to wish him good-morning, he looked inquiringly at her, and said:—

"Well, how do you like it, little one?"

Heidi looked up at him wonderingly.

"Perhaps you haven't been told about it yet!" exclaimed Herr Sesemann with a smile. "Well, you are going home to-day. You are to start right away."

"Home!" repeated Heidi in a voice that was hardly more than a whisper, while her face turned white as now. For a moment she could scarcely get her breath for the quick beating of her heart at the thought of it.

"Perhaps you don't want to go?" asked Herr Sesemann, laughingly.

"Oh, yes, I do," was Heidi's quick reply, and now she turned crimson.

"Oh, very well! very well!" said Herr Sesemann encouragingly, as he seated himself at the table and motioned the child to do likewise. "First you must eat a hearty breakfast and then you can get into the carriage and start off."

But Heidi could not swallow a mouthful, much

as she wished to be obedient. She was in such a state of excitement that she hardly knew whether she was awake or dreaming, and wondered whether she would not wake to find herself in her little white night-dress standing at the front door.

"Sebastian must take plenty to eat with him," said Herr Sesemann to the housekeeper who was just entering the room; "the child cannot eat now, as is quite natural." Then turning to Heidi, he added kindly: "Go and stay with Klara until the carriage is ready."

That was just what Heidi wished to do, and she ran off at once. In the middle of Klara's room stood a huge trunk, still wide open.

"Come, Heidi, come! See what we have packed into your trunk!" Klara called out as she caught sight of the child. "Are you glad?"

And she named a whole list of things—dresses and aprons, shawls and sewing materials. "And see here," she cried at the end, as she held up a little basket in triumph. Heidi peeped into it and jumped with joy, for there lay at least a dozen beautiful white rolls, all for the grandmother. In their delight the children quite forgot that in a few minutes they must part, and when suddenly they were startled by the cry, "The carriage is ready!" there was no time left for tears.

Heidi ran back to her room; her beautiful book,

the grandmamma's gift, was still there, under her pillow, where she always kept it, for she liked to have it with her both by day and night. She put it into the basket with the rolls. Then she opened the closet to look for another treasure which in all likelihood had not been packed. And, as she had thought, there lay the old red kerchief, for the housekeeper had not thought it good enough to put into the trunk. Heidi wrapped it carefully around another object she had taken from the closet, and laid it uppermost in the basket, leaving the edges of the red bundle quite plainly in sight. Then she put on her pretty hat and left the room.

The children had little time in which to say good-bye, for Herr Sesemann was standing ready to take Heidi down to the carriage. The housekeeper stood at the head of the stairs, waiting to bid Heidi farewell; when she caught sight of the strange red bundle in the child's basket, she quickly drew it forth, and dropping it on the floor, said reprovingly:—

"No, Adelheid, that is no way in which to leave a house like this. There is no need that you should take such stuff at all. Now, good-bye!"

After this rebuke Heidi dared not take her bundle again, but she looked so beseechingly at the master of the house that one might have supposed she was losing her greatest earthly treasure.

"No, no!" said Herr Sesemann in a tone of decision. "The child shall take home what pleases her; even if it were little kittens or turtles that she was taking with her we would not let it excite us, Fräulein Rottenmeier."

With a face beaming with happiness and gratitude Heidi quickly picked her bundle up from the floor.

Down by the carriage Herr Sesemann shook hands with the child, saying pleasantly that they would often think of her, he and his little daughter. Then he wished her God-speed, and Heidi thanked him heartily for all the kindness that had been shown her, saying in conclusion:—

"And I want to leave a thousand thanks for the doctor, too, with my love," for she remembered very well how the night before he had said: "To-morrow it will all be made right." Now it was as he had said, and Heidi thought it must be owing to him.

The child was then lifted into the carriage, and the basket, the hamper with provisions and Sebastian followed. Herr Sesemann called out cheerily: "A pleasant journey!" and the carriage rolled away.

Very soon Heidi was sitting in the train, holding the basket in her lap, for she would not lose sight of it for a single moment, knowing that it

held all the grandmother's precious rolls; all day she guarded them most carefully, peeping at them from time to time to assure herself that they were really there and to rejoice over them. Heidi sat very still for several hours, for she was beginning to realize that she was on the way home to her grandfather, the mountains, the grandmother and Goat-Peter. And now all the things she expected so soon to see rose before her, and she wondered how they would look; this suggested other thoughts, until suddenly she asked very anxiously:—

"Sebastian, are you sure that the grandmother, Peter's grandmother, has not died?"

"Oh, no," said Sebastian soothingly; "let us hope not. She's still alive, I've no doubt."

Then Heidi fell to musing again, interrupted only by a peep into her basket now and then, for what she looked forward to most of all was to lay all these rolls on the table before the grandmother. After some time she said again:—

"Sebastian, if I could only be quite sure that the grandmother is still alive."

"Oh, to be sure, to be sure," replied her companion only half awake. "I've no doubt that she's still alive. I see no reason why she shouldn't be."

By and by Heidi's eyes also closed in sleep; after the broken rest of the night before, and the early

rising, she was so sleepy that she did not awaken until Sebastian shook her by the arm and called out:—

"Wake up! Wake up! It is time to get off; we are in Basle!"

The next morning they continued their journey, and again Heidi sat with her basket in her lap, for on no condition would she have surrendered it to Sebastian. She spoke not at all now, for her eager anticipation was growing greater with every hour. Then, suddenly, before Heidi had expected it, the conductor called out, "Mayenfeld!" She jumped to her feet and Sebastian, who had also heard it with surprise, did likewise.

In a few minutes they were standing outside on the platform with the big trunk beside them, and the train rushing off toward the valley. Sebastian cast a rueful glance after it, for he would much rather have continued his journey in the comfortable car and without exertion, than to undertake the long tramp now before him, and which was to end with a mountain climb that would certainly be difficult and, perhaps, dangerous in this region where everything was still half wild, as Sebastian thought. He therefore looked cautiously about to find some one from whom he could learn the safest road to Dörfli.

Not far from the station stood a haywagon drawn

by a small, lean horse; into this a broad-shouldered man was tossing a couple of bags that had come on the train. Sebastian stepped up to the man and questioned him about the safest road to Dörfli.

"Here all roads are safe," was the short reply.

Sebastian now asked to be shown the best way to go so as to avoid falling over precipices, and also how a trunk could be got to Dörfli. The man looked at the trunk to measure it with his eye; then he said that if the thing was not too heavy he would take it on his wagon as he was going to Dörfli himself. One word led to another, and when the two men had finished their talk, it had been arranged that Heidi and her trunk were to go in the wagon with the man as far as Dörfli, from where the child could be sent up to her grandfather's with some one who was going up that way toward evening.

"I can go alone; I know the way very well from Dörfli to my grandfather's," said Heidi who had listened attentively to all that was said.

A heavy load seemed to have been lifted off of Sebastian when he found himself thus suddenly released from the dreaded mountain journey. He beckoned Heidi to one side, and, handing her a heavy package together with a letter for her grandfather, he told her that the package contained a present from Herr Sesemann, and she

must put it at the bottom of her basket, below the little rolls even, and must watch it carefully so as not to lose it, for Herr Sesemann would be very angry if it was lost. The little Mamsell must not forget this, he added impressively.

"I will not lose it," Heidi assured him, and stowed the package and letter away at the very bottom of the basket.

Then the trunk was put into the wagon, after which Sebastian lifted Heidi with her basket to the high seat in front, and, giving her his hand for a last good-bye, made all manner of signs to remind her once more that she must keep an eye on the package in the basket; for the driver was still within hearing distance, and Sebastian, who was always careful, was especially so now, for he knew well enough that he ought not to leave the child until she was safe at home.

At last the driver swung himself up to his place beside Heidi, and the wagon rolled away toward the mountains, while Sebastian, rejoicing over his escape from the much-feared climb sat down in the little station to wait for the returning train.

The driver of the wagon was the baker from Dörfli, who was taking his bags of flour home. He had never seen Heidi, but had known her parents, and, like everyone else in the village, had heard of the little girl who had been left with the Alm-

Uncle, and he concluded at once that this must be the much-talked-of child. He was a little curious now to know why Heidi was coming home so soon and so began to talk to her as they drove along.

"I suppose you are the child that staid with the Alm-Uncle a while. He's your grandfather, isn't he?"

"Yes."

"Then you cannot have fared very well, else you wouldn't be home again so soon from such a distance."

"Oh yes, I did. No one could have been better treated than I was in Frankfort."

"Then why are you running home?"

"Only because Herr Sesemann gave me permission; otherwise I would not have run home."

"Pooh! Why didn't you stay, even though they did let you go home?"

"Because I would a thousand times rather be at home with grandfather on the Alm than anywhere else in the world."

"Perhaps you will think differently when you get there," muttered the baker, and then continued to himself: "But it does seem strange; she ought to know best what to expect."

Then he began to whistle and said no more. Heidi looked about her and began to tremble with

excitement, for now she recognized the trees along the road, and over yonder the high cliffs of Falkniss mountain were outlined against the sky, and seemed to be looking at her and greeting her like old friends. Heidi nodded a greeting in return, and with every step forward she grew more impatient, until she felt as though she must jump out of the wagon and run as fast as she could to her journey's end. But she remained sitting where she was and did not stir, although she was all a-quiver.

Just as the clock struck five they drove into Dörfli. Instantly a crowd of women and children gathered around the wagon, and soon a few men came too, for the trunk and child on the baker's wagon had attracted the attention of the whole neighborhood, and everyone wanted to know to whom they belonged, whence they had come and whither they were going. When the baker had lifted Heidi out of the wagon, she said hurriedly:—

"Thank you; my grandfather will come after the trunk."

Then she turned and would have hastened away, but from every side detaining hands were laid upon her, and many voices asked each a different question. The child's face wore such an anxious look as she tried to force her way through the

crowd that unconsciously those who saw her stepped aside and let her run on, one saying to another:—

"See how afraid she is! And there is good reason for it, too!"

Then they began to tell one another that the Alm-Uncle had grown much worse during the past year, and that now he never spoke to anyone, but looked as though he would like to kill everyone that crossed his path; to this they added that if the child had any other place in the world to which she could go she never would run up to that old dragon's nest.

But at this point the baker broke in, saying that he believed he knew more about it than did any of the others. Then he told them in a very confidential manner how a gentleman had come with Heidi as far as Mayenfeld, where he had parted from her in a most friendly way; and that he had not only paid him for carrying the child, without so much as higgling about the price, but in parting, had even given him a little gift of money beside. To this the baker added that he was quite sure that the child had been kindly treated where she had been, but that she had nevertheless wished to return to her grandfather.

This piece of news was heard with the utmost astonishment, and was immediately carried all

over Dörfli, so that by night-fall there was not a house in the village where Heidi's wish to leave a life of luxury for the sake of returning to her grandfather was not being discussed.

Leaving Dörfli, Heidi ran up the mountain-side as fast as her feet could carry her; but now and then she found herself compelled to stop to get her breath; the basket on her arm was quite heavy, too, and the path grew steeper and steeper, the higher up she got. The child had but one thought now: "Will I find the grandmother alive, and will she be sitting in her corner beside her spinning wheel as usual?"

Before very long she caught sight of the little house in the depression of the mountain, and her heart began to throb; she ran faster, and louder and louder grew the beating of her heart. Now she was there; she was trembling so that she could hardly open the door; at last—she sprang into the middle of the tiny room and stood there, so out of breath that she could not utter a word.

"Merciful heaven!" cried a voice from out of the corner, "that is the way our Heidi used to run into the house. Ah, if I could only have her with me once more before I die! Who came in just now?"

"Here I am, grandmother! Here I am!" cried Heidi, rushing to the grandmother and falling on

her knees beside her; then she took hold of her arms and her hands, and nestled close to her, unable to speak for very joy. At first the grandmother's surprise was so great, that she too could not utter a word; then she passed her hand over Heidi's curly head, saying again and again:—

"Yes, yes; this is her hair, and it is her voice, too. Oh, dear God, I thank thee that she has come again!" and from out the sightless eyes two great tears of joy fell down on Heidi's hands. "Is it really you? Are you really here again?"

"Yes, really, grandmother, really!" Heidi assured her. "Do not cry; I am really here, and will come to see you every day, and will never go away again. And it will be many a day before you need eat hard black bread, for, see here, grandmother, see here!"

And Heidi took one little roll after another out of her basket until they all lay in a heap in the grandmother's lap.

"Oh, child! Dear child! What a blessing you bring with you!" cried the grandmother, when roll after roll came forth as though they would never end. "But you yourself are the greatest blessing of all!" she added as she stroked Heidi's curly head again and patted her hot cheek. "Speak to me again, child! Say another word, so that I may hear your voice again."

Heidi now told the grandmother how much she had feared that her old friend might have died while she was away, and that she would never, never see her again, and all the little white rolls would come too late.

Presently the door opened and Peter's mother came in, but on seeing Heidi stood motionless with astonishment, and exclaimed:—

"Surely, this is Heidi! But how can it be possible!"

Heidi rose and shook hands with Brigitte who could not find words enough to express her astonishment at Heidi's appearance. Walking all round the child, to see her from every side, she said:—

"Grandmother, if you could only see what a beautiful dress Heidi has on, and how she looks in it! I hardly knew her." And, turning to Heidi, "Is the hat with the feathers, lying yonder on the table, yours too? Put it on, and let me see how you look in it."

"No, I don't want to," was Heidi's very decided answer. "You may have it. I do not need it any more; besides, I still have my old one."

So saying, Heidi opened her red bundle and took out her little straw hat, to whose many dents the journey in the basket had added a few more. But this troubled Heidi very little; she had not

forgotten that the last words she had heard her grandfather say were that he never wanted to see her in a hat with feathers on it. That was why she had been so anxious to keep her old hat, for she had always looked forward to this home-coming.

But Brigitte reproved her for being so foolish, telling her that it was a beautiful hat, and that she could not think of accepting it; if Heidi really did not want to wear it, she could sell it for a good price; perhaps the Dörfli school-master would buy it for his little daughter. Heidi did not change her mind, however, but quietly laid the hat in the corner behind the grandmother, where it would not be noticed. Without a word the child slipped out of her pretty dress and stood there, bare-armed, in her little petticoat; then she tied the red kerchief round her shoulders and, taking the grandmother's hand in hers, said:—

"Now I must go home, grandmother; but to-morrow I will come again. Good-night, grandmother!"

"Yes, do come again, Heidi; do come to-morrow," was the grandmother's pleading reply as she held Heidi's hand in both her own, and could hardly let the child go.

"Why did you take off your fine dress?" asked Brigitte.

"Because I would rather go to grandfather this

way, for fear he might not know me. You said yourself that you hardly knew me when I had it on."

Heidi bade her "Good-night," and, with her basket on her arm, began to climb up toward the Alm. The green mountain slope was bright with the rays of the setting sun, and soon the great snow-field on Cäsaplana came in view glittering in the sunlight. After every few steps Heidi stood still and looked backward, for as she climbed up, the high mountains lay behind her. Suddenly the grass at her feet became tinged with red; she turned —and lo! a splendor such as neither her memory nor her dreams had ever painted. The jagged peaks of Falkniss flamed red against the sky, the great snow-field was aglow, while rosy clouds drifted across it. The grass on the mountain-side had turned to gold, every cliff shimmered and shone, and far below, the valley lay afloat in a sea of golden mist.

Heidi stood in the midst of all this splendor, and so great was her happiness and joy that the tears rolled down her cheeks as she folded her hands and looked up to heaven to thank the dear God for bringing her home again, and because everything was so beautiful, so much more beautiful than she had thought, and that it was all hers once more. And the child felt so glad, and so rich in this

wealth of beauty about her that she could not find words in which to express her gratitude to the dear God in heaven. Not until the light began to fade could she move from the spot; but then she ran so quickly up the mountain that it was not long before she saw the tops of the pine trees above the roof, and at last the hut itself with her grandfather sitting on the bench in front of it, smoking his pipe, while above the hut the old pine trees swayed and sighed in the evening breeze. Now Heidi ran faster than ever, and before the Alm-Uncle knew what it was that was coming up the mountain so fast, the child was at his side. Dropping her basket on the ground she threw her arms around the old man's neck, and cried:—

"Grandfather, grandfather, grandfather!" for this was all she could say in the joy of seeing him again.

The old man also had nothing to say. For the first time in many years his eyes were wet with tears and he had to dry them with the back of his hand. Then he unclasped Heidi's arms from about his neck and set the child upon his knee; after looking down at her a moment, he said:—

"So you have come home, Heidi; how did that happen? Very proud you do not look; did they send you away?"

"Oh, no, grandfather; you must not think that,"



Before the Alm-Uncle knew what it was, the child was at his side.

Heidi began very earnestly; "they were all very good to me, Klara and the grandmamma and Herr Sesemann. But you see, grandfather, I could hardly stand it until I could get home again to you, and sometimes it seemed to me I could not breathe for the lump in my throat. But I did not say anything, for that would have been ungrateful. Then all at once Herr Sesemann sent for me early one morning; I think the Herr Doctor had something to do with that—but perhaps the letter tells all about it." With these words Heidi jumped to her feet, and quickly took the letter and package out of her basket and laid them in her grandfather's hand.

"That belongs to you," said he, laying the package on the bench beside her. Then he read the letter, and without a word, put it into his pocket.

"Do you think you could drink some milk with me, Heidi?" he asked as he took the child by the hand and went toward the door of the hut. "But take your money with you, Heidi; it will buy a bed and bedding, and clothes enough to last you a couple of years."

"Indeed, I do not need it, grandfather," Heidi assured him; "for I have a bed, and Klara packed so many clothes into my trunk that I shall never need any more."

"Take it, take it, child, and put it away in the closet; some day you will find a use for it."

Heidi obeyed and hopping and skipping, followed her grandfather into the house. Here she ran from one corner to another in the joy of greeting all the old familiar things; then she climbed up the ladder to the loft, but came to a sudden stop, and cried down in great alarm:—

"Oh, grandfather, my bed is gone!"

"It will soon be back," came the answer from below. "I did not know that you were coming home. Now come down and get some milk."

Heidi ran down and, fetching her high chair, seated herself in her accustomed place. Taking up her little bowl she set it to her lips and drank eagerly, as though she had never had anything so good in all her life before; when she had drained it, she set it down, and drawing a deep breath, said:—

"There is nothing in the world as good as our milk, grandfather!"

Suddenly a shrill whistle was heard without; like a flash Heidi was out of the door. There, from the heights above, came the whole flock of goats, skipping, jumping, leaping into the air, and Goat-Peter in their midst. When he saw Heidi he stood as though rooted to the ground, and stared at her in speechless amazement. Heidi called out: "Good-evening, Peter!" and rushed in among the goats, crying:—

"Swanli! Bearli! It is I! Don't you know me?"

The little creatures must have recognized her voice, for instantly they began to bleat in an agitated manner, and Heidi called them all by name as they ran frantically about and pushed one another in their joy and eagerness to get near her. That impatient fellow, Goldfinch, took a leap over two of the other goats, so as to get close to her, and even timid little Snowhopli wedged her way through most persistently, even pushing aside the big Turk who looked amazed at such impudence and raised his bearded chin high in the air to show that it was he who was being thus treated.

Heidi was almost beside herself with joy at seeing all her old play-fellows once more; again and again she threw her arms around delicate little Snowhopli's neck and stroked the glossy coat of boisterous Goldfinch, never heeding the familiar way in which she was being pushed from side to side by the goats in their ardor, until she found herself close beside Peter who had not moved from the spot.

"Come down, Peter, and say 'Good-evening,'" Heidi called to him.

"So you have come back, have you?" the boy's surprise at length allowed him to say, as he came nearer and took Heidi's hand which she had been

holding out to him for some time. Then he asked as he always had when parting from Heidi after a day spent up on the pasture:—

"Are you coming with us again to-morrow?"

"Not to-morrow, but the day after, perhaps. To-morrow I must go to the grandmother's."

"It is good that you are back again," said Peter, drawing his face into wonderful wrinkles of delight; then he turned homeward. But he found his goats more unmanageable than ever before, for, when with coaxing and driving he had at length succeeded in gathering them all around himself, they suddenly turned about and all ran after Heidi who was walking with one arm around Bearli's neck and the other around Swanli's. Heidi had to go into the stable with her goats, and close the door after her, else Peter would never have got off with his flock at all.

When the child returned to the hut she found her bed all ready for her, the fragrant hay, only recently mowed, was piled high, and over it the grandfather had carefully spread the clean sheet and coverlet. It was a great joy to Heidi to climb into it, and she slept more soundly than she had for over a year.

During the night her grandfather left his bed no less than ten times and, softly mounting the ladder, listened to assure himself that Heidi was

asleep and not tossing restlessly. Then he would feel for the round loophole to learn whether the hay with which he had carefully closed it was still firmly in place; for henceforth the moon must not be allowed to shine on Heidi's couch.

But the child slept on without once waking, and did not stir from her bed, for now her great and burning desire was fulfilled: she had seen all the peaks and cliffs bathed in the sunset glow; she had heard the old pine trees sigh in the evening wind; she was at home again.

CHAPTER XIV

ON SUNDAY, WHEN CHURCH BELLS RING

HEIDI was standing under the swaying pine trees waiting for her grandfather, who was going down with her to get the trunk in Dörfli while she staid with the grandmother. The child could hardly wait to see the grandmother again and hear how she had liked the rolls; and yet the waiting did not seem long, for she could not get enough of the familiar music that the wind made in the pine trees, nor of the fragrance and beauty of the green mountain slopes sprinkled with golden flower-cups. Her grandfather now came out of the hut and after giving a scrutinizing glance all round. said in a satisfied tone of voice:—

"So, now we can go."

It was Saturday, the day on which the Alm-Uncle cleaned up and set everything in order in the hut, the stable and round about; that was his habit, and to-day he had devoted the whole morning to it, so that early in the afternoon he might go with Heidi; and this was why he now gave everything a glance of approval.

In front of Goat-Peter's house he and Heidi

parted, and the little girl ran in. The grandmother had recognized her step at once and called out lovingly:—

"Is it you, child? Have you come again?"

Then she took Heidi's hand and held it tightly in hers, as though she feared the child might be taken away from her again. The grandmother was now asked to tell how she had liked the little rolls, and in answer said they were delicious, and that she thought she felt stronger to-day than she had for a long time. To this Peter's mother added that the grandmother was so anxious to make the rolls last a long time that she had eaten only one since she had received them the day before; but that she believed her mother would grow quite strong again if she ate one a day for a whole week. Heidi listened very earnestly to what Brigitte said, and for some time afterward looked very thoughtful. At last she had solved her problem.

"I know what we will do, grandmother," she said with glad eagerness; "I will write Klara and ask her for some more rolls, and then, I know, she will send us as many as you have now, and perhaps twice as many, for I had quite a large heap of them when they were taken away from me. And Klara promised to give me just as many as I had, and I am sure she will do it."

"Why that is a good idea," said Brigitte; "but

think how stale they will grow! If we only had a little spare money! The baker down in Dörfli makes just such rolls, but it is all I can do to pay for the black bread we eat."

A look of delight suddenly came into Heidi's face.

"Oh, I have a great lot of money, grandmother," she cried in high glee, as she danced about with joy, "and I know just what I will do with it! Every day you shall have a roll, and two on Sundays, and Peter can bring them home with him from Dörfli."

"No, no, child; that will not do," remonstrated the grandmother; "that is not what the money was intended for. Give it to your grandfather, and he will tell you how to spend it."

But Heidi would not be turned from her purpose, and in her delight skipped about the room, crying over and over again:—

"Now the grandmother can have a roll every day, and get real strong again, and—oh, grandmother," she cried in sudden joy, "if you get well and strong, it will grow light for you again, too, won't it? Perhaps it is only because you are weak."

The grandmother said nothing, for she did not wish to mar the child's happiness.

In dancing around the room Heidi had caught

sight of the grandmother's old hymn book, and it suggested another happy thought to her.

"Grandmother," she said, "I can read now. Shall I read for you out of your hymn book?"

"Oh, yes!" said the grandmother in glad surprise. "But can you do it, child? Can you really read?"

Heidi climbed on a chair and got down the old book from where it lay covered with dust, for it had not been touched for a long time. She dusted it tidily, and, seating herself on the footstool at the grandmother's side, asked her what she would like to hear.

"Anything you please, child; anything you please," was the grandmother's answer as she pushed her wheel a little to one side and then waited eagerly.

Heidi turned the pages and read a line here and there to herself.

"Here is something about the sun; I will read that to you, grandmother," she said, and began to read:—

"The sun is beaming,
Awake from dreaming!
Behold its gladness,
And leave thy sadness;
The light that it sheds is God's gift to thee.

"Hast thou a sorrow?
Then hope for the morrow!
'Tis not by groaning,
Or piteous moaning
That eyes are opened God's goodness to see.

"With sight God-given,
Look up to heaven,
And seeing its glory,
Read there the story
Of infinite power and merciful might.

"There the pure-hearted,
From earth departed,
Freed of life's burden,
Shall find the guerdon
That awaits the children of light.

"What here we cherish,
Ere long must perish;
But God endureth;
His word assureth
Each doubting heart of His undying love.

"His mercy sought us;
His grace hath taught us
When hearts are aching
Well nigh to breaking,
Their pain shall be healed with balm from above.

"And none shall be weary;
No days be dreary;

Earth's struggle ended,
To heav'n ascended
Thou'lt rejoice in the sun that knows no night.

"Sweet peace, unbounded,
Deep love, unsounded,
Joy without measure,
And purest pleasure
Await thee there, in heav'n's garden so bright."

The grandmother sat with folded hands and with an expression of unutterable joy on her face, such as Heidi had never seen there before, although the tears were coursing down the withered cheeks. When Heidi had finished, the grandmother said pleadingly:—

"Oh, once more, Heidi; let me hear it once more:

'And none shall be weary;
No days be dreary—' "

And the child began again and read with a strange feeling of joy and longing:—

"And none shall be weary;
No days be dreary;
Earth's struggle ended,
To heav'n ascended
Thou'lt rejoice in the sun that knows no night.

"Sweet peace, unbounded,
Deep love, unsounded,
Joy without measure
And purest pleasure
Await thee there, in heav'n's garden so bright."

"Oh, Heidi, that gives me light; that sheds a new light into my heart. Oh, what great happiness you have brought me, Heidi!"

Again and again the grandmother repeated the message of joy, while Heidi's face beamed with pleasure. The child could not take her eyes off of the grandmother's face, for never before had she seen her look like this. She had lost her careworn expression, and, instead, her face wore a cheerful and grateful look, as though even now she beheld heaven's garden so bright.

A rap on the window was now heard, and Heidi saw her grandfather beckoning her to come out. She obeyed at once, but before she went, assured the grandmother that to-morrow she would certainly come again; for even should she go to the pasture with Peter, she would stay only half the day, and then come down to her. For to be able to give the grandmother light, and to see her look so happy, was a greater pleasure to Heidi than anything else, even greater than to spend the day on the sunny pasture with the beautiful flowers and merry goats.

Brigitte ran after the child as far as the door to give her the hat and dress she had left the day before; Heidi took the dress, since there was no longer any danger that her grandfather would not know her; but the hat she stubbornly refused to touch, declaring that she would never put it on her head again, never.

Heidi's heart was so full of her latest experience, that she had to tell her grandfather all about it as soon as she saw him; that the little while rolls for the grandmother could be bought down in Dörfli, if there were only money enough to pay for them; and how light and happiness had all at once come to the grandmother. When she had told him all this, she went back to her first thought, and said very confidently:—

"And grandfather, even though the grandmother doesn't wish it, you will give me all the money in the package, won't you? So that I can give Peter enough for a roll for every day of the week, and two on Sundays; won't you, grandfather?"

"But the bed, Heidi," said her grandfather; "a real bed would be a good thing, and even after that is bought there will still be money enough left to pay for many a roll."

But Heidi gave her grandfather no peace, telling him that she had slept much better on her bed

of hay than ever she had on the feather pillows in Frankfort; and so persistently did she plead, that finally her grandfather yielded, saying:—

"The money is yours; spend it as pleases you; it will buy bread for the grandmother for a long, long time."

Heidi gave a shout of joy.

"Now the grandmother will never have to eat hard black bread any more," she cried. "And oh, grandfather, everything is better now than it ever was before in all our lives, isn't it?"

And with her hand still in her grandfather's, the happy child danced up and down with joy, giving little glad cries now and then, like a merry bird of the air. Suddenly she grew very serious, and said:—

"But oh, grandfather, if the dear God had given me right away what I prayed for so hard, it would all have been different; then I would have come home at once, and the grandmother would have had only a few rolls, and I should not have been able to read to her what does her so much good. But the dear God had planned it all so much better than I thought; the grandmamma told me so, and now it has all come as she said. Oh, how glad I am that the dear God did not do as I asked when I begged and cried so hard!

"But now I will always pray as the grand-

mamma told me, and thank the dear God; and when he does not give me what I ask, I will think: 'Perhaps it is just as it was in Frankfort, and the dear God probably knows of something much better for me.' But we will pray every day now, won't we, grandfather? And never forget the dear God, and then He will never forget us either."

"And if a person does forget Him, what then?" muttered the grandfather.

"Oh, he will never be happy, for then the dear God will forget him, too, and let him go his own way, and then when he gets into trouble, no one will be sorry for him, but everyone will say: 'He turned away from the dear God first, and now the dear God, who alone could help him, leaves him to take care of himself.' "

"That is very true, Heidi. How did you learn it?"

"The grandmamma told me. She explained it all to me."

"The grandfather walked on a while in silence. Then, following the train of his thoughts, he said, more to himself than to the child:—

"And if it is so, it stays so; no man can turn back; and whom the Lord has forgotten, He has forgotten."

"Oh no, grandfather; a man can turn back. I know that from what the grandmamma said; and

then it is like the beautiful story in the book. But you don't know that. Well, we are almost home now, and then you shall hear for yourself what a beautiful story it is."

In her eagerness, Heidi went faster and faster up the last slope, and hardly had she reached the top when she dropped her grandfather's hand and ran into the hut.

The old man let the basket he had on his back slip to the ground; he had put into it half of what was in Heidi's trunk, for the whole would have been too heavy for him. Then he sat down on the bench and remained lost in thought. Presently Heidi came running out with her big book under her arm.

"Oh, how nice, grandfather, that you are sitting here already," she said, and with a spring she was on the bench beside him with her book open at the story, for she had read it so often that the book fell open at the right page.

Then the child began to read with great earnestness about the son who had a good home, where fat cows and sheep grazed in his father's pastures; and from where he stood among them, in his fine coat and leaning on his shepherd's staff, he could see the beautiful sunset, just as it was all shown in the picture. "But one day he asked his father to give him his portion and let him go where he would

be his own master. Then he went into a far country and wasted all he had; and when it was gone, he hired himself out as a servant to a farmer who had no fine cows and sheep like those in his father's pasture, but only pigs; these he tended, dressed only in rags, and eating of the husks with which he fed the pigs. Then he remembered how well he had fared at home, and how good his father had been to him, and how ungrateful he himself had been, and he wept with bitter remorse and homesickness. And he thought: 'I will go to my father, and ask him to forgive me, and will say: "Father, I am no more worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants."' And as he approached the house his father saw him from afar, and ran out to meet him"—

"And what do you think is coming next, grandfather?" Heidi here interrupted the story. "You think the father will be angry, and say: 'Didn't I tell you it would be so?' But just hear what he does. 'And when he beheld his son, he felt sorry for him, and he fell on his neck and kissed him. And the son said: "Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." But the father said to his servants: "Bring forth quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; and bring the fatted calf, and kill it,

and let us eat and be merry; for this, my son, was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found." And they began to be merry.'

"Isn't it a beautiful story, grandfather?" asked Heidi, as the old man still sat silent when she had expected him to be surprised and delighted.

"Yes, Heidi, it is a beautiful story," said her grandfather; but his face looked so grave that Heidi, too, grew silent and looked at her pictures. Then the child made another, last attempt. Softly she pushed her book toward her grandfather, and pointed to the picture of the returned wanderer standing beside his father, freshly clad and happy, a reclaimed son. "See how happy he is," she said.

A few hours later, while Heidi lay fast asleep, her grandfather climbed up the little ladder; when he reached the child's bedside he set down his lamp, and the light fell on the sleeping child. She lay with folded hands, for she had not forgotten to pray; her rosy little face wore a look of sweetest peace and trust, that must have had its message for her grandfather, for he stood there a long, long time and did not stir, his eyes fixed on the sleeping little one before him. At last he, too, folded his hands, and with bowed head, said softly:—

"Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight and am no more worthy to be called thy son," and two great tears rolled down the old man's cheeks.

Not many hours later, the Alm-Uncle stood before his hut, and looked about him with a new light in his eyes. The soft sunshine of an early Sunday morning lay on mountain and valley. Now and then the sound of church bells was wafted up from the valley below, while above him, in the old pine trees, the birds were blithely singing their morning carols. After a little while the grandfather went into the hut, and called up to the loft:—

"Come, Heidi! The sun is up. Put on a good dress, and we will go to church together."

Heidi did not keep him waiting long, for this was an entirely new call from her grandfather, and must be quickly obeyed. In a few minutes she came tripping down in one of her pretty Frankfort dresses, but when she saw her grandfather, she stopped in surprise, and looked at him.

"Oh, grandfather!" she exclaimed; "never before have I seen you look like this! And that coat with the silver buttons! Have you ever worn it before? Oh, you are so handsome in your beautiful Sunday clothes!"

The old man smiled pleasantly down at the child, and said:—

"And you in yours. Now come!" and taking Heidi's hand in his, they went together down the mountain.

From every side the music of the church bells

greeted them, sounding fuller and stronger as they came nearer to them. Heidi listened enchanted, and said:—

"Do you hear, grandfather? It is like a great, great holiday."

Down in Dörfli the people were already at church and were just beginning to sing as Heidi and her grandfather came in and took the farthest seat back. But in the midst of the singing the person who saw them first nudged his neighbor, and said:—

"Did you see that? The Alm-Uncle has come to church."

And the one who received the nudge passed it on to his neighbor, and so on, until in the shortest possible time, it was being whispered in every corner of the church: "The Alm-Uncle! The Alm-Uncle!"

Nearly all the women had to turn their heads at least for a moment, and many of them lost the time, so that the leader found it hard to keep the hymn going.

But when the pastor began to preach they were inattentive no longer, for there was such earnest praise and thanksgiving in what he said that all his hearers were touched, and it seemed as though some great joy had come to them all.

When the service was over, the Alm-Uncle took

the child by the hand and turned toward the parsonage. All the people who went out with him, or were already outside, looked after him, and most of them even followed him to see if he was really going into the parsonage. When he did so, they stood about in little groups, and in great excitement discussed this unheard-of-event, that the Alm-Uncle had actually come to church. And all eyes were turned to the parsonage in great expectancy to see how the Uncle would come out; whether in anger and resentment, or at peace with the pastor; for nobody knew what had brought the old man down, nor what it all meant.

But many had already changed their minds about him, and one said to another: "The Alm-Uncle is probably not as bad as he is painted; just see how carefully he holds the little one by the hand." And the other replied: "That is what I always said. And he wouldn't go to see the pastor if he were so very wicked, for he would be afraid. People do exaggerate so!" And the baker said: "Didn't I tell you so first of all? Who ever heard of a little child that would willingly leave a home where there was plenty to eat and drink, and where she was well treated, and, turning her back on all this, run back to a grandfather who was so cross and wicked that she was afraid of him?"

And this new feeling of kindness toward the

Alm-Uncle was so catching that soon there were more for him than against him, especially as the women now joined the group, and more than one of them had something to tell that she had heard from Goat-Peter's mother or grandmother, and which showed the Alm-Uncle in a very different light from that in which he had generally been regarded. They were all willing to believe it now, and gradually began to feel as though they were waiting to welcome back among them an old friend whom they had sorely missed.

Meanwhile the Alm-Uncle had knocked at the door of the study and stood waiting; it was opened by the pastor himself who stepped forward to meet him without any sign of surprise, but rather as though he had expected this visitor whose unusual appearance in church could not have escaped him. He grasped the old man's hand and shook it repeatedly in the most friendly manner. It was some time before the Alm-Uncle found his voice, for he had not expected so cordial a welcome. At last he said:—

"I have come to ask the Herr Pastor to forget the words I spoke to him up on the mountain, and not to remember it against me that I rejected his well-meant advice. The Herr Pastor was right in all he said and I was wrong; but I intend to follow his advice and take a house in Dörfli during the

winter, for it is too severe a season up yonder for a delicate child. And if my neighbors look at me askance, as though I were not to be trusted, I must remember that I deserve it; and the Herr Pastor will not do so, I am sure."

The kindly eyes of the pastor beamed with pleasure. He took the old man's hand in his once more and pressed it heartily; then he said with emotion:—

"Neighbor, you must have been in the right church before ever you came to mine, and I rejoice with you. You shall not regret coming down to live among us again; and as for me, you will always find the welcome of a good friend and neighbor at my house, and I am looking forward to many a pleasant winter evening with you, for I enjoy and prize your company greatly. And for the little girl we will find friends, too."

With the last words the pastor laid his hand on Heidi's curly head, and, taking the child by the hand, walked to the door with her grandfather. There he bade him good-bye, standing in the doorway where all the people outside could see how the Herr Pastor shook the Alm-Uncle's hand again and again, as though he were his best friend from whom he was sorry to part.

Hardly had the pastor's door closed before all the people began to crowd around the Alm-Uncle,

each one trying to be the first to greet him; and so many were the hands that were held out to him that it was hard for him to decide which one to take first. One neighbor called out to him: "I am glad, Uncle, I am glad to see you among us once more!" and another: "I have long wanted to have a word with you, Uncle!" And so they called and crowded from every side, and when the Alm-Uncle replied to all these friendly greetings by saying that he intended to occupy his old quarters in Dörfli again and spend the winter among his old neighbors, such a shout arose that one would have supposed the Alm-Uncle to be the most popular person in Dörfli, whose company everyone had missed with regret.

Many of the good people accompanied the old man and his grandchild for some distance up the mountain, and when at last they bade him good-bye, nearly all of them wanted the Alm-Uncle to promise to come to see them when next he passed through Dörfli. When they had all turned back and were going down the mountain, the old man stood looking after them a long time with so friendly a glow on his face that it seemed as though the sun had risen within him and was sending its beams outward. The child, who had been regarding him for a long time, suddenly exclaimed:—

"Grandfather, you are growing more and more

beautiful to-day. I have never seen you look like this before!"

"Do you think so?" asked her grandfather with a smile. "Well, you see, Heidi, everything has gone so well with me to-day—better than I deserve or can understand. And to be at peace with God and man makes the heart light. The dear Lord was very good to me when He sent you up to the Alm."

When they reached Goat-Peter's hut the Uncle opened the door and stepped in, saying:—

"A good-day to you, grandmother! I think we will have to do some more mending before the autumn winds begin to blow."

"Dear me, that is the Uncle!" cried the grandmother in glad surprise. "To think that I should live to see this day! Now I can thank you myself for all your kindness to us. May the good Lord repay you, Uncle! May the good Lord repay you!"

And trembling with joy the old grandmother held out her hand to the Alm-Uncle, who shook it warmly. Then, still holding his hand in hers, she continued:—

"There is one favor I want to ask of you, Uncle; if ever I have done you any wrong, do not punish me for it by letting Heidi go away again before I myself am laid away in the church-yard. Oh, you

do not know all the child is to me!" and she put her arm around Heidi, who had crept close to her.

"Never fear, grandmother," was the Uncle's soothing reply; "I have no wish to punish either you or myself in that way. Now we are together and, God willing, will stay so for many a year."

Now Brigitte drew the Uncle to one side in a confidential way. Showing him the pretty feather-trimmed hat, she told him how it had come into her possession, saying that of course she could not accept such a gift from a child.

But the grandfather gave Heidi a glance of approval, and said:—

"The hat is hers; if she does not want to put it on her head again, she is right; and if she gave it to you, why, keep it."

Brigitte was much pleased at this unexpected decision.

"It surely is worth ten pfennigs or more; just see!" she cried, holding the hat high above her head in her delight.

"What a blessing Heidi brought with her from Frankfort! I have lately been wondering whether it would not be a good plan to send Peterli to Frankfort. What do you think of it, Uncle?"

An amused twinkle came into the Uncle's eyes as he replied that it certainly could do Peter no harm, but he advised Brigitte to await some good opportunity.

At this moment Peter himself came stumbling into the room after he had first run his head against the door so violently that everything in the little room quaked. Peterli must have been pressed for time. Panting for breath, he stood in the middle of the room holding out a letter. This was indeed a most unusual event, one that had never occurred before—a letter addressed to Heidi, and which had been given him at the postoffice in Dörfli.

Now they all drew their chairs up to the table, and seating themselves around it, listened in eager expectancy. Heidi opened her letter and read it through without stumbling at a single word. It was from Klara Sesemann, who wrote to tell Heidi that since she had gone the house was so dull that she could not endure it; so she had persuaded her father to take the trip to Ragaz during the coming autumn; and her grandmamma was coming with her, for she, too, wanted to visit Heidi and her grandfather in their mountain home.

The good news created such surprise and rejoicing, and there was so much to ask and to talk about, since all were equally concerned in it, that even the grandfather did not notice how late it was getting. And so happy and gay were they in the prospect of the days soon to come, and, perhaps, even more so in the present glad reunion, that at last the grandmother said:—

"But the best of all is when a good old friend like you comes to greet us again as of old; that warms the heart and gives us the comforting thought that some day all those who have loved each other here will be together again. You will soon come again, will you not, Uncle? And the child, to-morrow?"

The promise the grandmother asked was gladly given, and then the grandfather said it was time for Heidi and him to go. Together they took their way up to the Alm, and, as in the morning the joyous bells had called them down, so now the sound of the sweet evening bells from the valley below accompanied them on their upward way, growing fainter and fainter as they approached the sunny spot where stood their little home in the peaceful light of a Sunday evening.

But in the autumn, when the grandmamma comes, there will be many a pleasant surprise in store for Heidi as well as for the grandmother, and then, no doubt, a real bed will find its way into Heidi's loft, for wherever the grandmamma appears there everything is soon in good order, without as well as within.

CHAPTER XV

PREPARATIONS FOR A JOURNEY

THE good doctor by whose advice the child Heidi had been sent back to her home was just going up the broad street that led to the Sesemann house. It was a sunny September morning, so bright and lovely that it seemed as though it must bring joy to everyone. But the Herr Doctor's eyes were bent so intently upon the white paving stones at his feet that he did not see how blue the sky was above him. There was a sadness in his face that was new to it, and his hair had grown much whiter since the spring. He had had an only daughter, a blooming girl who had been his greatest joy and closest friend ever since her mother's death, and now, only a few months ago, death had robbed him of her also. Since then he had never been his old merry self again.

His ring at the door was answered by Sebastian who threw open the front door with such a show of politeness and of being the Herr Doctor's most obedient servant that it was plain to be seen that the visitor was not only the nearest friend of the master of the house and his little daughter, but that by his kindly manner he had endeared himself to every one in the house.

"Everything as usual, Sebastian?" asked the doctor in his ever kindly voice as he went up stairs followed by the obsequious servant who was still bowing and scraping, although this was lost on the doctor whose back was turned toward Sebastian as he preceded him up the stairs.

"I am glad that you have come, Doctor," was Herr Sesemann's greeting as soon as he saw him. "We must have another talk about that trip to Switzerland. I want to know whether you are still of the same opinion, now that Klara seems so much better."

"My dear Sesemann, what am I to think of you?" replied the doctor as he seated himself beside his friend. "I really wish your mother were here; she would understand at once and everything would be settled. But you are always beginning over again. This is the third time you have sent for me to-day, only to tell you the same thing I have said before."

"Yes, you are quite right; it is enough to try your patience. But you see, my dear friend," and here Herr Sesemann laid his hand appealingly on the doctor's arm, "it is so hard for me to deny the child what I promised her so faithfully, and what she has been looking forward to both by day and night for months past. This last illness the child has borne so patiently, too, cheered by the thought

that the trip to Switzerland was soon to be taken, when she would visit her little friend Heidi up in the Alps. And now I am to tell the good child, to whom so much is denied, that this long-cherished wish is also to remain unfulfilled. I cannot bear to do it."

"Sesemann, there is no other way," said the doctor in a tone of decision; and as his friend still sat before him in dejected silence, he continued: "Just think of the circumstances. The past summer has been the worst that Klara has had for years; the most serious consequences are to be feared from so long a journey. Moreover, it is now September, a season which may be very delightful up in the mountains, but which may also be very cool. In addition, the days have grown short, and as Klara can certainly not remain over night with her friend, she would have only a few hours at a time up there. From Ragaz up to the Alm must be a trip of several hours, and she must be carried all the way in a chair. In fact, Sesemann, it is out of the question. But I will go with you to Klara and tell her my plan, and, since she is a sensible girl, she will make the best of what cannot be helped. Next May she can go to Ragaz and take the baths, remaining there until it has grown pleasant and warm higher up in the mountains. Then she can be carried up to see her friend

every few days, and, refreshed and strengthened by her stay at Ragaz, she will enjoy these mountain trips much more than she could now. You understand, Sesemann, that if we are to have any hope of your little daughter's recovery we must proceed most wisely and carefully."

Herr Sesemann, who had so far listened in silent resignation, now showed signs of great agitation as he exclaimed:—

"Tell me the truth, Doctor! Have you really any hope that Klara's condition will improve?"

With a shrug of the shoulders the doctor said sadly:—

"Very little. But come, my friend, think of me for a moment. You still have your dear child who longs for you when you are absent, and welcomes you on your return. You do not come back to a desolate house and sit down to a lonely meal. You are able to give your child a beautiful home; although it is true that she is denied much that others enjoy, she has, on the other hand, many advantages that others lack. No, my friend, you two are not so greatly to be pitied after all, for you have the joy of being together. Think of my lonely home!"

Herr Sesemann had risen and was walking up and down the room with long strides, as was his habit when greatly disturbed. Finally he came to a halt before his friend, and laying his hand on the other's shoulder, said:—

"Doctor, I have an idea. It grieves me to see you so unlike your old self; you ought to have a change, and I will tell you how to get it; you must take the trip to the Alps and go see the child Heidi in our stead."

The doctor was quite startled at this proposal, and would not listen to it at first; but Herr Sesemann gave him no opportunity to refuse. He himself was so pleased and filled with this new plan that, taking his friend by the arm, he hurried him into his daughter's room. The good doctor was always a most welcome visitor at the sick girl's bedside, for he had been so kind to her ever since she could remember, and had always had some merry jest of cheerful story to tell her. She knew very well why he was so sad and quiet now, and would gladly have done something to make him happier.

As soon as she saw him she held out her hand to him, and he sat down beside her. Herr Sesemann also drew up a chair, and taking Klara's hand in his began to talk about the trip to the Alps, and how he himself had looked forward to it with so much pleasure. But the principal point, that it must be abandoned for the present, he passed quickly over, for he dreaded the tears that would follow. Then he passed on to the new plan, directing Klara's attention to the benefit that their

friend would derive from the trip if he would take it in their stead.

The tears that he had dreaded did not fail to come, but filled Klara's blue eyes in spite of her brave efforts to keep them back, for she knew how it grieved her papa to see her cry. But it was very hard that all her plans were to end so, for the thought of her visit to Heidi had been her one joy and comfort all through the long lonely hours of the dreary summer she had just passed. But Klara never teased, for she knew very well that her father refused her only that which would be bad for her and so must not be. She choked down her tears and turned to the only hope that now remained. Taking her kind friend's hand in hers, she stroked it softly and said pleadingly:—

"Oh, please, Herr Doctor! Do go to see Heidi; and then, when you come back, you can tell me how it looks up there, and what Heidi does, and her grandfather, and Peter and the goats. I know them all so well! And you can take with you what I want to send to Heidi—I have thought it all out—and something for the grandmother, too. Please, go, Herr Doctor! If you do, I will take all the cod-liver oil you order while you are away."

Whether the doctor was influenced by this bribe will never be known, but it is to be supposed that he was, for with a smile he now said:—

"Then I will surely have to go, my little Klara, for that will make you round and fat as we want you to be, your papa and I. And when am I to start? Have you decided that yet?"

"Early to-morrow morning will be the best time, Herr Doctor," was Klara's reply.

"Yes, the child is right," her father here broke in; "the sun is bright and the sky is blue; there is no time to be lost, for it is a pity that you are not enjoying every day like this up in the Alps."

The doctor had to laugh.

"The next thing will be that I shall be scolded for still sitting here with you, Sesemann," said he rising; "so it seems best to take myself off."

But Klara laid a detaining hand on his arm; there were a number of messages she wished him to give Heidi, and several things that he must notice carefully so that he would be able to tell her about them on his return. The gifts for Heidi would be sent to him later in the day, she said, for the things must all be packed together, and Fräulein Rottenmeier had gone on one of her shopping excursions from which she was not likely to return very soon.

The doctor assured Klara that all her orders would be faithfully executed and, although he could not start early in the morning, he would, if possible, do so before the close of another day. He promised that on his return he would give his little

friend an accurate account of all he had seen and heard.

There are servants who have a wonderful faculty of learning what is going on in a house long before its master or mistress sees fit to tell them. Sebastian and Tinette must have possessed this gift in a high degree, for hardly had the doctor opened the door when Sebastian stood ready to attend him down stairs, and Tinette entered the room of her little mistress the very moment that the bell was rung for her.

"Take this box and have it filled with very fresh soft cakes, such as we eat with our coffee, Tinette," said Klara, pointing to a box that had long stood waiting for this occasion. Tinette took hold of it by one corner, and dangling it disdainfully at her side, left the room. On the threshold she said pertly:—

"It's well worth the trouble."

Down stairs, Sebastian was holding the door open for the doctor with his usual politeness and, after an extra bow, said:—

"Would the Herr Doctor be so kind as to give Sebastian's regards to the little Mamsell?"

"Well, Sebastian," exclaimed the doctor in his pleasant way, "how did you find out that I am going on a journey?"

Sebastian gave an embarrassed cough and then began:—

"I was—I had—I hardly know myself—oh, yes, as I was just now passing through the dining-room I heard the little Mamsell's name mentioned and, as is often the case, one thought suggested another —and in this way"—

"Oh, I see, I see," said the doctor with a smile; "and the more thoughts one has, the more he finds out, eh? Well, good-bye, Sebastian, until we meet again. I will deliver your message."

So saying the doctor turned to hurry out of the door but suddenly ran against an unexpected obstacle. The strong wind had prevented the housekeeper from continuing her wanderings through the shops, and, having returned, she was just entering the front loor. The wind had caught the wide cape she wore and had puffed it out so that she came along like a ship with all sails set. The doctor beat a hasty retreat. But to him this lady was always wonderfully obliging and amiable. She also drew back with extreme courtesy, and for a moment the two stood on either side of the door, each politely making way for the other, when suddenly a powerful gust of wind blew the housekeeper straight toward the doctor. He stepped aside just in time, for that instant the lady was blown past him and so far beyond that she had to turn back in order to give a suitable greeting to this old friend of the family. The violence of the

wind had somewhat ruffled Fräulein Rottenmeier's temper, but the doctor had a way that was as oil on the troubled waters of her spirit. He at once confided to her his intention of taking a journey, and then asked her in the most winning manner to pack the things that he was to take to Heidi, saying that no one could pack them as could she. Then he bade her good-bye.

Klara was looking forward to a series of conflicts with the housekeeper before the latter would consent to pack all the things she intended to send Heidi; but to her surprise the lady was amiability itself. She immediately cleared the long table, and then arranged upon it all the things Klara had gathered together, so that the little invalid could look on while they were being packed. This was no small task, for the articles that were to be sent were of the most varied nature and shape. First, there was a short heavy cape with a hood, which Klara intended for Heidi, so that during the coming winter the child could visit the grandmother whenever she wished, and not have to depend on her grandfather to take her down wrapped up in the heavy sack to keep her from freezing. Next there was a thick warm shawl for the old grandmother to wrap round herself so that she need no longer shiver when the bitter winter winds

searched the cottage. Then there was the box with the cakes; that was for the grandmother, too, so that she might have something besides rolls with her coffee. Then came a huge sausage which Klara had originally intended for Peter as a change from his constant diet of bread and cheese. But she had decided differently for fear that Peter, in his delight, would eat up the whole sausage at once. It was therefore to be sent to mother Brigitte, that she might first cut a generous slice for herself and another for the grandmother and then give Peter his share from time to time as seemed best to her. There was a bag of tobacco; this was for the grandfather who, as Klara was well aware, liked to smoke his pipe as he sat on the bench of the hut. Last of all came a number of mysterious little bags, bundles and boxes which Klara had got ready with special delight, for each one contained a surprise for Heidi, something which Klara knew would please the child.

At last Fräulein Rottenmeier's work was finished, and an imposing looking package, all ready for the journey, lay in one corner of the room where the housekeeper stood looking down at it, lost in contemplation of the great art of packing. Klara, for her part, cast glances of joyful anticipation at it as she pictured to herself

Heidi's surprise and delight, and almost heard the child's shout of joy when the big bundle should appear. Sebastian now came in and, swinging the heavy package to his shoulder, hurried away with it to the doctor's house.

CHAPTER XVI

A GUEST ON THE ALM

THE soft flush of early morning lay on the mountain tops, and a fresh wind was sweeping through the pine trees, swaying their old branches to and fro. Heidi opened her eyes, for the sound had waked her. This song of the pine trees had a deep fascination for Heidi and called her with a power she could not resist. She jumped from her bed and found it hard to take the time to dress herself properly; but Heidi knew very well that it must be done, and that she must be tidy and clean.

Then she climbed down the ladder; her grandfather's bed was empty, and she ran to the door where she saw the old man standing in front of the hut looking up at the sky and in every direction, as he did each morning to see what the weather would be.

Rosy clouds were drifting across the sky which was growing bluer and bluer, and the heights and pasture lands were tinged with gold, for the sun was just rising from behind the lofty peaks.

"Oh, how beautiful! How beautiful! Good-morning, grandfather!" cried Heidi running out to join him.

"So your bright eyes are open, too?" was her grandfather's greeting as he held out his hand to her.

Heidi ran under the pine trees, dancing up and down with pleasure at the rush and roar among the tossing branches overhead, and at every fresh gust of wind and deeper bowing of the tall tree-tops she gave a shout of delight and leaped a little higher.

Meanwhile her grandfather had gone into the stable to milk Swanli and Bearli, after which he brushed and washed them well; then he brought them out, ready for their trip to the pasture. As soon as Heidi saw the pretty creatures she ran to them, and throwing her arms around their glossy necks gave them a loving greeting. The goats bleated with joy and affection, and each tried to get its head a little closer to Heidi's shoulder, almost crushing her between them as they vied with each other to show their love for her. But Heidi was not afraid of them, and when the energetic little Bearli pushed and pressed somewhat too roughly, she said:—

"No, no, Bearli! You butt just like the big Turk himself!"

Instantly Bearli drew back and stood aside very properly, while Swanli, too, raised her head and assumed an elegant attitude, showing plainly that

the little creature was thinking: "No one shall ever have reason to say that I behave like the big Turk." For Swanli, with her coat of spotless white, regarded herself as a little superior to brown Bearli.

Now Peter's shrill whistle was heard, and a few moments later they came bounding up the mountain side, all the merry goats with the active little Goldfinch in the lead, showing his gay spirits in many a leap and caper. In an instant Heidi was in the midst of the merry rout, being pushed hither and thither in the ardor of the greetings that were given her. But she, too, did some pushing on her part, for she wished to get to where timid little Snowhopli was struggling toward her, but was always being pushed back by some stronger goat.

When Peter appeared he gave a last tremendous whistle, by which he intended to frighten the goats off and send them on their way to the pasture, for he himself wanted a place beside Heidi. At the threatening sound the flock scattered, and Peter stepped up to Heidi.

"To-day you ought to go with us again," he said rather crossly.

"No, Peter, I can't," replied Heidi. "They may be here at any moment now, and I must be at home to greet them."

"You have made that excuse before," muttered Peter.

"But it is a good one, and will be until they come," retorted Heidi. "Or do you perhaps think that I need not be at home when they come all the way from Frankfort to see me? Is that what you think, Peter?"

"The Alm-Uncle will be here to meet them," growled Peter.

At this point they were interrupted by the loud voice of the old man calling from within the hut:—

"Why doesn't the army move forward? Is the fault with the field-marshal or with the troops?"

Instantly Peter turned about face, cracked his whip, and away went the goats, for they knew the sound well; Peter was close at their heels and the whole troop disappeared up the mountain side on a quick trot.

Since Heidi's return to her grandfather's home she thought of many things that had never before occurred to her. For instance, she made her bed every morning now, pulling and stroking it until it looked quite smooth. Then she ran hither and thither in the hut, setting every chair in its own place, and gathering up anything that lay or hung about, and putting it carefully away in the closet. When this was done, she got a cloth, and, climbing on a chair, wiped and polished the table until it shone. When afterward her grandfather came indoors he would give an approving glance all round,

and perhaps say: "It always looks like Sunday in the house now," or, "It was not for nothing that Heidi went to Frankfort."

To-day, too, after Peter and his goats had trotted off together, and she and her grandfather had eaten their breakfast, Heidi turned at once to her household duties; but she found it hard to go on with them. It was so lovely out of doors this morning, and every few moments something called the child away from her work. Just now a sunbeam came dancing so merrily in at the window that it seemed plainly to say: "Come out, Heidi! Come out!" She could not resist it, and out she ran. The gleaming sunlight lay upon the hut and all about it; it brightened the distant mountain tops and fell far, far down into the valley; yonder, where the path descended, the ground looked so dry and golden in the sunshine that it was in itself an invitation to Heidi to come and sit on it awhile and look about her. But she had hardly seated herself when she remembered that the three-legged stool was still standing in the middle of the room and that the table had not been cleared of the breakfast dishes. She jumped up and ran back into the house. But it was not long before she heard such a tumult in the old pine trees that she must needs go out and join them in their frolic, and dance up and down in time with the swaying of the great branches above her head.

Her grandfather was in the shop working at several small jobs; from time to time he stepped to the door and with a smiling face watched Heidi's capers. He had just returned to his work once more when he heard the child cry out:—

"Grandfather, grandfather! Come, come!"

He stepped out quickly, almost fearing that some ill had befallen her; he saw her running to where the path descended abruptly, while she called excitedly:—

"They are coming, they are coming! And the Herr Doctor is the first of all!"

Heidi rushed to meet her old friend who approached with his hand held out to greet her. When the child reached him she clasped his outstretched arm with both her own, crying joyfully:—

"How do you do, Herr Doctor? And thank you again a thousand, thousand times."

"God bless you, little Heidi! And what is it you are thanking me for so soon?" asked the doctor with a pleasant smile.

"Because I am at home again with grandfather," explained the child.

The doctor's sad face brightened as with a ray of sunshine; this was a greeting he had not expected. With only his sad thoughts for companions the lonely man had climbed the mountains without

noticing how beautiful it was about him, nor that it grew more so with every step upward. He had supposed that Heidi would hardly recognize him, she had seen so little of him; moreover, coming as he did without the friends she expected, he regarded himself as one who brings a disappointment to those to whom he goes, and whom they will therefore scarcely care to see. Instead of this, Heidi's eyes beamed with pleasure, and, full of gratitude and love, she was clinging to the arm of her kind old friend.

With fatherly tenderness the doctor took the child by the hand. "Come, Heidi," said he cheerily, "take me to your grandfather and show me your home."

But Heidi remained standing where she was, and looked down the mountain path with an expression of mingled expectation and surprise.

"Where are Klara and her grandmamma?" she asked at length.

"Now I shall have to tell you something that grieves me as much as it does you, Heidi," replied the doctor. "I have come alone. Klara is ill, too ill to travel, and so the grandmamma did not come either. But in the spring, when the days have grown long and warm again, they will surely come."

Heidi stood in silent consternation; it was hard

to believe that all she had looked forward to so long was after all not to be. For some moments she remained motionless as though dazed by the unexpected news. Without a word the doctor stood beside her, the silence about them broken only by the sighing of the wind in the pine trees high overhead. Suddenly Heidi remembered why she had run down there, and that the doctor had come. She looked up at him, and saw something very sad in the eyes that met her own, something she had never seen there before; in Frankfort the doctor had never looked at her so. It went to Heidi's heart; she could not bear to see any one suffer, much less the good doctor. It must be, she thought, because Klara and the grandmamma had not come with him. Eagerly she sought for some way in which to comfort him, and quickly found it.

"Oh, the spring will soon be here, and then they will surely come," she said consolingly; "the time never seems long here. And then, when they come, they can stay much longer, and Klara will be glad of that. Now let us go up to grandfather."

Hand in hand the two went to the hut together. The child was so anxious to see her good friend look happy again that she began afresh to assure him that up here on the Alm it would not seem long at all before the long warm days of summer

would be back again; indeed, they would come before the doctor was aware of it. She was so persuasive that she became quite consoled herself, and when she saw her grandfather she called out cheerily:—

"The others have not come yet, but it will not be long before they will be here, too!"

To her grandfather the doctor was by no means a stranger, for the child had talked so much about him. The old man met his guest with outstretched hand and gave him a hearty welcome. Then the two men sat down together on the bench in front of the hut, leaving a little place for Heidi to which the doctor kindly beckoned the child. Then he began to relate how Herr Sesemann had persuaded him to take the journey, and how he had himself thought that it would be good for him, since he had lately not felt quite as active and strong as usual. Then he whispered in Heidi's ear that something would be coming up the mountain presently, something that had come all the way from Frankfort with him, and that she would enjoy much more than a visit from the old doctor. This made Heidi very curious to know what it might be.

The Alm-Uncle now advised the doctor to spend all of the few remaining lovely days of autumn up on the Alm, or at least to come up on every fine day, for the Uncle would not invite him to remain with

them altogether, as the hut had no accommodations to offer a guest like the doctor. He suggested further that instead of returning to Ragaz the doctor should take a room down in Dörfli, where plain but comfortable lodgings could be procured. From there the doctor could easily come up to the Alm on every fine morning and then spend the day with them, which would surely do him much good, the Uncle thought. He also offered to take his guest to a number of interesting places higher up in the mountain, which the doctor would be glad to see.

This plan seemed very pleasing to the doctor, and he decided at once to carry it out.

Meanwhile the sun had climbed to the zenith, the wind had long ago ceased and left the pine trees motionless and silent. For this high altitude the air was still soft and mild, and as they sat in the warm sunshine a refreshing breeze fanned their cheeks. The Alm-Uncle rose, and going into the hut soon returned with a table which he set in front of the bench.

"Now, Heidi, run in and get what we need for the table," said he. "Our guest must content himself with what we can offer and, although our fare is plain, our dining-room is grand."

"I quite agree with you," said the doctor as his eyes rested on the sunlit valley far below him.

"And as for the invitation, I accept it most gladly; in this air a dinner must taste very good."

Heidi ran back and forth, as busy as a bee, fetching out everything that she could find in the closet, for to wait on the doctor was a great pleasure for her. Meanwhile her grandfather was preparing the meal and soon appeared with the steaming jug of milk in one hand and in the other the golden cheese toasted to a tempting brown. Then he cut fine, transparent slices of the rosy meat that he himself dried up here in the pure mountain air. The doctor enjoyed his dinner more than any he had tasted in a whole year.

"Yes, yes," said he, "this is the place for our Klara. Here she will gain new strength, and if she can eat for a while as I have eaten to-day she will grow round and plump as never before in all her life."

At this moment some one was seen coming up the mountain with a heavy load on his back. When the man arrived in front of the hut he threw his burden on the ground and took a few long breaths of the fresh mountain air.

"Ah, here is what came with me from Frankfort," said the doctor as he rose and drew Heidi with him to where the bundle lay. He began at once to undo it, and when he had taken off the many outside wrappings, he said:—

"There, child; now you can undo the rest and take out all your precious treasures yourself."

Heidi did as she was told, and when all the things lay spread out before her she stood and gazed at them with eyes of wonder. Not until the doctor lifted the cover from the big box saying: "See what the grandmother is going to have with her coffee!" did the child find her voice. Then she danced about the box and clapped her hands with joy as she cried gleefully:—

"Oh, oh! Now the grandmother will have some lovely cakes to eat!"

She wanted to pack everything together and hurry away to the grandmother at once, but her grandfather suggested that she should wait until evening, when, together, they would accompany the doctor down the mountain and take the things to the grandmother.

So Heidi returned to her gifts and soon discovered the pretty bag full of tobacco which she quickly brought to her grandfather. He was much pleased with it and filled his pipe at once. The two men then continued their conversation, sitting on the bench together and blowing great clouds of smoke into the air, while Heidi played about, picking up one of her treasures after another, not knowing which she liked the best. After a while she left them all and placing herself before



"See what the grandmother is going to have with her coffee!"

the doctor waited for a pause in the conversation, when she said with great decision:—

"No, there is nothing there that I enjoy more than the visit from the old doctor."

The two men laughed heartily, and the doctor declared that this was certainly more than he had expected.

When the sun approached the tops of the western mountains the visitor arose, for it was high time to return to Dörfli and secure the necessary lodgings. He tood Heidi by the hand while her grandfather gathered together the box of cakes, the big sausage and the shawl, and put them under his arm; then the three went down the mountain together as far as the goatherd's hut. Here Heidi bade the doctor good-bye, for she was to remain with the grandmother until her grandfather came back from Dörfli, whither he was going to accompany his guest.

As Heidi shook hands with the doctor, she said questioningly:—

"Perhaps you would like to go up to the goat pasture with us to-morrow?"

To Heidi's mind this was the greatest treat she had to offer.

" 'Tis a bargain, Heidi," said the doctor; "we will go together."

The men went on, and Heidi opened the door

into the little house. With might and main she first dragged in the big box of cakes; then she turned back for the huge sausage—for her grandfather had set everything down just outside the door—and last of all, she brought in the big shawl. She laid all the things as close to the grandmother as possible, so that by touching them she might learn what they were. The shawl Heidi laid across the grandmother's knees.

"All from Frankfort! Klara and her grandmamma sent them all!" was Heidi's jubilant explanation to the astonished grandmother and her daughter; Brigitte was so dazed with surprise that she stood there without so much as raising a finger to help the child who tugged away at all the heavy things and spread them out before her wondering eyes.

"And oh, grandmother, aren't you very, very glad to have the cakes? See how soft they are! Just see!" cried the happy child again and again.

"Yes, yes, Heidi, indeed I am; what good people they must be who sent them!" was the grandmother's reply; then as she passed her hand caressingly over the soft warm shawl she added: "What an excellent thing for the cold winter days! It is too fine for me, finer than anything I ever expected to have."

Heidi wondered that the grandmother should be more delighted with the dull gray shawl than with the beautiful cakes. Brigitte was still standing before the huge sausage upon which she looked with a feeling almost of reverence. Never before in all her life had she seen such a giant sausage. And to think that it was her own, and that presently she would cut it! It seemed almost too good to be true. She shook her head in doubt, and said that she would have to ask the Alm-Uncle what it all meant. But Heidi was in no doubt about it, and told her that it was meant to be eaten.

Just then Peter came stumbling in.

"The Alm-Uncle is just behind me; he wants Heidi"—there the boy stopped, for his eye fell on the table where lay the monster sausage, and he was so overcome by the sight of it that speech failed him. But Heidi guessed what he was going to say, and quickly bade the grandmother good-bye.

The Alm-Uncle's step had come to be a most welcome sound to the blind woman, for he never passed the house now without going in, if only to wish the grandmother a good-day and say a cherry word or two. But to-day it was very late for Heidi, who was always up with the sun. "The child must have her sleep," thought the grandfather, and remained firm. So he stopped only long enough to call a good-night to the grandmother

through the open door, while Heidi came running out to him. Then he took the child by the hand, and the two climbed upward together to where their peaceful home stood under the shining stars.

CHAPTER XVII

A RECOMPENSE

EARLY the next morning the doctor joined Peter and his goats in Dörfli to climb the mountain in their company. The friendly old gentleman made several attempts to begin a conversation with the goatherd, but received only low-muttered monosyllables in reply from the boy. It was no easy matter to engage Peter in conversation. And so it was a silent company that arrived in front of the Alm-Uncle's hut where Heidi stood waiting with both her goats, all three as bright and merry as the early sunbeams on the heights above them.

"Coming with us?" asked Peter, for, whether as question or as invitation, he said the same words every morning.

"To be sure I am, if the Herr Doctor will come too," was Heidi's reply.

Peter cast a sidelong glance at the strange gentleman.

Just then the grandfather came out of the hut with the dinner bag in his hand and, after a very respectful greeting to the doctor, stepped up to Peter and hung the bag over his shoulder.

It was heavier than usual, for the Alm-Uncle had put in a fine slice of the rosy meat so that the gentleman might have his dinner with the children should he wish to remain up on the pasture with them. Peter's mouth widened until it reached almost from ear to ear with a smile of delight, for he surmised that there was something unusual stowed away in the bag.

The little company now started on its way up the mountain. Heidi was entirely surrounded by the goats, one after the other being pushed aside by those behind as they crowded to get next to her; and so she was carried along in the midst of the merry throng until, with an effort, she stood still and holding up her finger said:—

"Now you must all be good and run on, and don't come back to push and crowd again, for now I must walk with the Herr Doctor for a while."

Then she patted Snowhopli, who always kept close beside her, and told the little goat to be especially good and obedient. Then the child made her way out of the flock, and walked beside the doctor who immediately took her hand and kept it in his own for the rest of the way. He had no need to seek for something to talk about now, for Heidi began at once to tell him about the goats and their curious ways, about the flowers, the gray cliffs and the birds, making the time pass so quickly that

the pasture was reached before they knew it.

All the way up the mountain, Peter had cast sidelong glances at the doctor, that might have struck terror to his heart had he seen them, which, fortunately, he didn't.

When they had come to the end of their journey, Heidi at once conducted her good friend to her favorite spot where she always went to sit and gaze about her, for she thought it the most beautiful place of all. To-day she did as usual, and the doctor sat down beside her on the sunny slope.

The golden sunshine of a perfect autumn day lay on the rocky heights above them and flooded the green valley below. Everywhere from the lower pasture lands the tinkle of herd bells was wafted upward, sounding as calm and sweet as though they were ringing in peace to all mankind. The great snow-field opposite glistened and sparkled with the dancing sunbeams upon it, and the gray peaks of Falkniss lifted their rock-crowned heads in ancient majesty far into the dark blue vault above them. The morning breeze swept softly over the grass, gently swaying the few bluebells that still remained of the summer's vast throng, and now nodded contentedly in the sun's warm rays. Far overhead the great eagle was sweeping about in wide circles; to-day, however, he was not screaming, but with

outstretched pinions was quietly sailing through the blue sky enjoying the sunshine.

Heidi looked hither and thither—at the blithely nodding flowers, the blue sky, the merry sunshine, the contented bird in the air above them, and thought it all so lovely, so lovely. The child's eyes were bright with happiness; she looked at her friend to see whether he, too, was enjoying the beauty about him. So far the doctor had gazed around in silence, wrapt in thought; now, as he met the child's eyes that beamed at him with pleasure, he said:—

"Yes, Heidi, it is very beautiful up here; but what do you think? If a man brings a heavy heart with him, what must he do so that he may enjoy all the beauty around him?"

"Oh, oh!" cried Heidi cheerily; "there are no heavy hearts up here; they are all in Frankfort."

A smile came to the doctor's face, but soon left it again.

"But suppose, Heidi," said he, "that some one brings all the sadness of Frankfort with him up here; is there anything that can help him then?"

"When we are in trouble and do not know what to do, we must tell it all to the dear God," said Heidi with perfect confidence.

"Yes, that is a good way, child," said the doctor;

"but if that which makes us so unhappy is sent by God himself, what is there to tell Him then?"

Heidi had to think hard over this new question, although she felt very sure that there was no sorrow for which the dear God knew no help. She sought for the answer in her own experience.

"Then we must wait," said she after a pause, "and think all the time: 'No doubt the dear God knows something good that will come of this, and I must wait and not turn away from Him.' Then, after awhile, we shall see that the dear God had something good in mind for us all the while; but because we could not see it at once, but only saw what made us so dreadfully sad, we thought it would always be so."

"That is a beautiful belief, my child," said the doctor; "hold to it always." For a few moments he sat in silence, his eyes resting on the mighty cliffs before him, and then on the green and sunny valley below; then he began again:—

"Look you, Heidi, there might be some one sitting here on whose eyes lay a great darkness, making it impossible for him to see all the beauty about him. Such an one might be doubly sad here knowing that all this beauty was not for him. Can you understand that?"

Heidi's glad heart felt a sudden pain, for the doc-

tor's words about a great darkness on the eyes brought to her mind the poor grandmother who could never again see the bright sunshine, nor all the glad beauty of the world up here. This was a grief that always wrung Heidi's heart afresh whenever she thought of it. She did not speak for some time, for the pain had come so suddenly into her happiness. At length she said very earnestly:—

"Yes, I can understand it. But I know of help even for that; we must say the grandmother's hymns; they will bring a little light, perhaps so much that we will grow quite happy again. The grandmother told me so."

"What are the hymns, Heidi?" asked the doctor.

"I only know the one about the sun and the beautiful garden, and of the other long one a few verses that the grandmother likes the best, for when I come to those she always wants me to read them again."

"Say those verses for me, my child; I should like to hear them," said the doctor getting ready to give close attention.

With her hands clasped in her lap, Heidi sat thinking for a while; then she said:—

"Shall I begin with the verses that the grandmother says bring a new hope to the heart?"

The doctor nodded assent, and Heidi began:—

Oh, trust, and let him guide thee!
He is thy sovereign wise,
And ever close beside thee
Will shape to thy surprise
The life thou dost surrender
Into his loving hand,
That, ever kind and tender,
Will lead thee to the end.

Think not that he has left thee
If in his all-wise reign,
He has of joy bereft thee
And sent thee bitter pain;
For though in grief and anguish
He leaves thee for a space,
'Tis not to see thee languish,
But to teach thee of his grace.

Doubt not his love and power;
Steadfast and true abide,
And in thy darkest hour
Thou'lt find him at thy side,
Bearing the burden for thee,
Breaking the chains that bound,
Shedding the blessing o'er thee,
That thou at last hast found.

Heidi broke off suddenly, for she doubted that the doctor was still listening. He had shaded his eyes with one hand and did not stir. She thought he must have fallen asleep, and that, should he

care to hear any more verses when he awoke, he would ask for them.

There was a deep silence. But, though the doctor said nothing, he was not asleep. His thoughts had gone far back to a day in his childhood. Again he stood, a little boy, beside his dear mother's chair; with one arm about his shoulders, she was repeating the hymn of which Heidi had just said a few verses, and which he had not heard in many years. Again he heard his mother's voice, and saw her kind eyes looking lovingly down into his, and after the last words of the hymn had died away, his memory brought back other words that the dear voice had spoken, and which he must have been glad to hear again and follow in thought, for it was a long time that he sat there, silent and motionless, with his hand over his eyes. When at length he roused himself, he found Heidi's wondering eyes upon him; taking the child's hand in his, he said: "Heidi, your verses are beautiful," and his voice sounded cheerier than it had. "We will come here again some time, and then you must say them over again for me."

During all this time Peter had been busily engaged in giving vent to his wrath. For days Heidi had not come to the pasture at all, and now, that she had, there was that old gentleman sitting beside her all the while, so that Peter himself could

not so much as get near her. It enraged him beyond endurance. Taking a position just behind the unsuspecting gentleman, where there was no danger of being discovered, he doubled up one fist and shook it savagely; after awhile he doubled up both fists, and the longer Heidi sat beside the stranger, the higher and more threateningly did Peter swing his fists back and forth behind the gentleman who sat there so unconscious of his peril.

Meanwhile the sun had reached the point which indicates the dinner hour; Peter saw it at once, for he never needed to be told of it. Suddenly, with all his might he shouted at the two sitting before him:—

"It's time to eat!"

Heidi rose to fetch the bag, so that the doctor might eat his dinner without disturbing himself. But he told her that he was not hungry, and would only drink a glass of milk; afterward he would wander about the pasture a while, and then climb a little higher up the mountains. Upon hearing this Heidi discovered that she, too, was not hungry and wanted nothing more than a drink of milk. She offered to take the doctor up to the great moss-covered cliffs where Goldfinch had once come near to losing his life, and where the spicy herbs grew that the goats liked so much. She ran to Peter to explain it all to him, and to tell him that he must

first get a bowl-full of milk from Swanli for the doctor, and then another for herself.

The boy looked at her in great surprise, and then asked breathlessly:—

"Who is to have what is in the bag?"

"You may have it all; but first you must get the milk; and be quick about it," was Heidi's reply.

Never before had Peter carried out an order as promptly as he did this one; for there lay the bag before him, and as yet he had no idea what there might be in it, although this was now all his own. As soon as Heidi and the doctor had their milk, Peter opened the bag and took a hurried glance at its contents. When he beheld the delicious piece of meat he trembled with joy, and took another hasty glance to assure himself that it was not all a delusion. Then he quickly thrust his hand into the bag to bring forth the coveted treasure and enjoy it, but instantly drew it back empty, as though he were afraid to take what he saw. He had suddenly remembered how he had stood behind the stranger and had shaken his fists at him, and now that gentleman had given him the whole of his excellent dinner. Peter was seized with remorse for his evil deed, for he had a feeling that it stood between him and the precious gift he longed to enjoy. Suddenly he jumped up and ran back to the

place where he had stood with clinched fists; then, holding up both arms with hands wide open to show that his evil intentions were gone, he stood so for some time until he felt that due atonement had been made. Then he leaped back to the bag and, with his conscience clear once more, began his unusually good dinner, and enjoyed it to the utmost.

Heidi and the doctor wandered about together for a long time and found much to say to each other. But finally the doctor said that it was time for him to go back, for he thought that the child would like to play with the goats for a while. But Heidi would not hear of it, for in that case the doctor would have to find his way alone down the mountain. She insisted on going with him as far as her grandfather's hut, and even a little piece beyond. She went hand in hand with her good friend, and had still much to tell him and to show him on the way down—all the places where the goats liked best to graze, or where in summer the shining yellow blossoms of the willowherb or the red centaury and many other flowers grew in such abundance. She knew them all, for during the summer her grandfather had taught her the names as he knew them.

But at last the doctor insisted that Heidi must turn back, and when he had bidden her good-bye, he went on alone down the mountain path. Looking

back from time to time, he saw Heidi still standing where he had left her, her bright eyes following him and her little hand waving a last good-bye to him, just as his own dear daughter had bade him farewell when he went from home.

The month that the doctor spent in the mountains was so bright and sunny that every morning brought him to the Alm-Uncle's door. Then there were pleasant jaunts in one direction or another. Sometimes the two men climbed far up the mountains to where the ancient, weather-beaten pine trees looked down on them, and where among the gray cliffs the eagle must have built his nest for here he circled and screamed close above the heads of the two intruders.

The doctor was always very much interested in what his companion had to tell him, and often wondered at the old man's knowledge of the many plants that grew in this mountain region; for he knew them all and what good purpose they would serve. He could find so much that was good and useful up among the rocks—in the spicy resinous pines, in the dark spruce trees with their fragrant needles, in the curling moss that nestled between their gnarled old roots, and in all the tiny plants and humble blossoms which the rich mountain soil brought forth even at this great height.

With the ways and habits of all the creatures,

both great and small, that lived up here the Alm-Uncle was just as familiar, and he had many an amusing story to tell the doctor about these curious dwellers in rocky crevice, underground cave, or high treetop.

The time passed so quickly when the two men were off on these excursions that the doctor could hardly realize that it had gone, and as he grasped the old man's hand in their cordial parting at night, he often said:—

"I never leave you, my good friend, without having learned something both new and useful."

But there were many days, and they were generally the most beautiful ones, that the doctor spent up on the pasture with Heidi. Then the two usually passed some hours on the beautiful sunny slope where they had sat on the first day of the doctor's visit, and Heidi would repeat the verses they both loved so well, or tell her friend all the many things that were so interesting to her. At these times Peter often sat in his old place behind them, but he never shook his fists at the doctor now-a-days, but sat there very quietly and peacefully.

All too soon the charming month of September came to an end, and one morning the doctor came to his friends without the cheery look his face had lately worn again, and announced that this was to be his last day with them, for it was time for him

to be back in Frankfort. The parting grieved him sadly, he said, for the Alm had grown to be as dear to him as his own home. The Alm-Uncle heard the news with deep regret, for the doctor's company had been a great delight to him; and as for Heidi, she had become so used to the daily companionship of her kind friend that it seemed almost impossible to spend the days without him. She turned to him with a questioning look of surprise in her eyes. But it was only too true.

After bidding her grandfather good-bye, the doctor asked Heidi to go with him for a short distance. Taking his hand she went down the mountain path with him, but even yet could not realize that he was indeed leaving them. After a while the doctor stood still and told Heidi that she must turn back now, for she had come far enough. He passed his hand caressingly over the child's curly hair two or three times and said:—

"Now I must go, Heidi. If I could only take you back to Frankfort and keep you with me!"

In an instant all Frankfort rose before Heidi's eyes—the many, many houses, and all the stone-paved streets, Fräulein Rottenmeier also, and Tinette. With an anxious look she said timidly:—

"It seems to me that it would be pleasanter to have you come back to us."

"You are right, my child. That will be much

better. So farewell, my little Heidi!" said the kindly doctor, holding out his hand to the little girl. As the child laid her hand in his she looked up at her friend and saw tears in the kind eyes that looked down at her. Turning away hastily, the doctor hurried down the mountain.

Heidi stood motionless where he had left her. The sight of the kind eyes filled with tears had raised a great conflict in her heart. Suddenly she burst into tears and running after her departing friend as fast as her feet could carry her she called in a voice choked with sobs:—

"Oh, Herr Doctor, Herr Doctor!"

The doctor turned and stood waiting for her. When the child reached him, she sobbed out with the tears still rolling down her cheeks:—

"I will go with you, Herr Doctor, and will stay in Frankfort just as long as you wish; only wait until I run back and tell grandfather about it."

The doctor laid a gentle hand on the excited child's head and said soothingly:—

"No, my dear Heidi, not now. You must stay here among the pine trees a while longer else you might get sick again. But tell me, my child, if some day I should be ill and alone, would you come to me then and stay with me? Can I feel that there is some one who will care for me then and love me?"

"Yes, indeed, Herr Doctor! I will come on the

very day you send for me; and I love you, too; nearly as much as I do grandfather," Heidi assured him between her sobs.

With another loving clasp of the little one's hand the doctor turned and hurried on his way. Heidi stood looking after him, waving her hand in farewell as long as there was anything to be seen of her friend.

As the doctor looked back for the last time at the beckoning little figure standing on the sunny mountain-side, he murmured:—

" 'Tis a good place yonder, good for both body and soul; and a heavy heart can grow light again up there."

CHAPTER XVIII

A WINTER IN DÖRFLI

ALL around the Alm-Uncle's hut the snow lay so high that it looked as though the windows came all the way down to the ground, for below them there was nothing to be seen of the little house, and the front door had disappeared altogether. Had the Uncle been living there he would have had to do as Peter was now doing every day, for hardly a night passed without bringing a heavy snow-fall. Every morning the boy had to climb through the window and jump out into the snow. If the night had not been very cold so that everything was frozen stiff, he disappeared entirely in the soft snow; then, by beating, kicking and pushing with his hands and feet, and even with his head, he worked his way out. Then his mother would hand him the big broom through the open window, and with this he would push and sweep the snow away from before him until he reached the front door where the most difficult part of his task awaited him. All the snow in front of the door had to be shovelled to one side, for, should it remain soft, the entire mass would fall into the kitchen as soon as the door was opened; or, should

it freeze, the inmates of the little house would be prisoners, for no one could cut his way through these great blocks of frozen snow, and only Peter was small enough to slip in and out of the tiny window.

But the season of ice and snow also brought many advantages to Peter. When he wanted to go to Dörfli he had only to open the window and crawl out to find himself on the solid crust of snow. Then his mother would hand out his sled to him, and when he was seated on it, he had but to give it a push, to go speeding away in any direction he chose, for the whole mountain side was one great slide.

But the Alm-Uncle was not in his mountain hut this winter; he had kept his word, and at the first snow-fall had locked up house and stable, and had taken Heidi and the goats down to Dörfli. Here, quite near the church and the parsonage, stood a rambling old building which in times long past had been a great mansion as was still plainly to be seen, although the entire structure was more or less in ruins. It had once been the home of a brave soldier of the Spanish wars, who had not only done many a valiant deed, but had taken much booty as well. With this he returned to his native place and built himself this handsome house in which he intended to spend the rest of his days. But before long he wearied of quiet little Dörfli, and

longed to be back again in the noise and tumult he had learned to love. He closed his house and left Dörfli never to return to it. After many years, when there could be no longer any doubt that the former owner was dead, a distant relative from down in the valley took possession of the house, but found it so nearly in ruins that he decided not to rebuild it. Since then, poor people who could not afford to pay much rent lived in it, and they gave little heed if here or there a stone fell or a wall crumbled away.

But even that was long ago, and when the Alm-Uncle returned to Dörfli with his son, Tobias, he found the old house unoccupied, and so moved into it. After he left it, it remained empty most of the time, for no one who did not know how to mend a leak or a break here and there could live in it, for in Dörfli the winter was a long and bitter season. Then the draughts swept through the great bare rooms, blowing out the lights and making the unfortunate inmates shiver and shake with the cold.

But the Alm-Uncle knew what to do; as soon as he had decided to spend the winter in Dörfli he reengaged the old house, and after that he spent many a fall day hammering and mending at the old house until it appeared to his satisfaction. About the middle of October he and Heidi moved into it.

Upon coming into the house from the rear, the

first room to be entered was half out of doors, for on one side the entire wall had disappeared, and on another only half remained standing; the upper part of this still formed a bay window in which, for many years, there had been no glass; in its stead the friendly ivy had curtained the empty spaces, and then climbed upward until it reached the beautifully arched ceiling which was only partly destroyed, and plainly showed that this had once been a chapel. There was no door between it and the great hall beyond, where the floor was still partly covered by handsome tiles between which the grass had forced its way. Here, too, a part of the ceiling as well as half the walls had fallen and, had not a few heavy pillars supported what was left of the ceiling, any person standing beneath would had reason to fear it might fall and crush him. Here the Alm-Uncle had mended the walls and lined them all round with boards, and then covered the floor thickly with hay, for in this ancient hall the goats were to have their winter quarters.

From here numerous passageways led away, all more or less in ruins, so that in some the blue sky could be seen above, while others gave a view of the fields and road beyond. But nearest at hand was a heavy oaken door which still hung firmly on its hinges, and led into a large room which had remained in good condition. Its four walls with

their deep wainscoting of oak were without a break, and in one corner stood a huge stove that reached almost to the ceiling, its white tiles ornamented with large pictures traced in blue. Here were to be seen ancient towers surrounded by high trees under which a hunter with his hounds was hurrying along; then there was a quiet lake reflecting the wide-spreading branches of the trees that lined its shores where stood a fisherman holding his rod far out over the water. A bench that ran all the way round the stove, offered a convenient seat from which to study the pictures.

Heidi was delighted with this spot. Hardly had she and her grandfather stepped into the room together when she left him to run to the stove and, seating herself on the circular seat, began to study the pictures. Slipping along on the bench she soon came behind the stove where a new discovery claimed all her attention. There was quite a large space between the wall and the stove, and here her grandfather had set up four boards in the shape of an apple-bin. No apples were to be seen in it, however, but in their stead there was every evidence that this was to be Heidi's bed. It was piled high with hay over which was drawn the sheet, and the whole was finished with the linen sack for a coverlet, just as it had been up in the loft of the Alm-hut. With a shout of joy, Heidi cried:—

"Oh, grandfather, this is my bed-room! Oh how lovely! But where are you going to sleep?"

"Your bed-room has to be near the stove, so that you will not freeze," said her grandfather. "Come, now you shall see mine too."

Skipping merrily along behind her grandfather, the child followed him to the other side of the long room, where he opened a door leading into a smaller one in which stood his own bed. There was a second door which Heidi quickly espied and opened, and then stood motionless with astonishment. Before her was a sort of kitchen, but a much larger one than she had ever seen before. On all sides could be seen the handiwork of her grandfather, and yet there was still much for him to do, for there was not a wall which did not show rents and holes through which the wind could whistle in, although the Alm-Uncle had already boarded up so many that the room appeared to have innumerable little wooden closets on every wall. By means of nails and wires he had succeeded in hanging the massive old door on its hinges so that it could be closed tightly; and this was a good thing, for beyond it were only ruined walls between which weeds grew rank and high, while beetles and lizards crawled in and out.

Heidi was delighted with her new home, and explored every nook and corner so thoroughly that

when Peter came on the very next day to see how they were getting on in their new quarters, she was quite at home and could show him everything. Nor did she let him rest until he had seen each and every one of the strange and interesting things in this wonderful new dwelling.

Although Heidi slept excellently in her bed behind the stove, her first waking thought was always that she was still up in her mountain home, and that she must quickly run and open the door to see whether the pine trees were so silent because their boughs were heavy with new-fallen snow. Then she had to look all around the room before she could remember where she was, and when at length she realized that she was not on the Alm, she always felt a heavy weight and pressure at her heart. But when she heard her grandfather's voice without, as he talked to Swanli and Bearli, and then heard their merry bleating in response as though they were saying: "Hurry up, Heidi, and come out to us," she felt that she was at home after all, and leaping out of bed with a joyous bound she hurried into her clothes and out into the great goat-stable.

On the fourth day in their new home Heidi announced:—

"To-day I must go to see the grandmother; she ought not to be left alone so long."

But her grandfather would not hear of it. "Not to-day, nor to-morrow either," said he. "Up yonder the snow lies as high as a man's head now and it is still snowing. It is hard enough for a strong fellow like Peter to work his way through; a little thing like you would sink into the snow and soon be covered over so that no one could find her. Wait a little while; when it freezes, you can easily walk up there on the crust of the snow."

The waiting came a little hard at first, but Heidi's days were so full of work now that before she was aware of it one had slipped away and another had come. Every morning and every afternoon found her eagerly at work in the Dörfli school, learning all that was taught there; but only very rarely did she see Peter there, for he seldom came. The master of the school was a mild-tempered man, and only remarked once in a while:—

"It seems that Peter is absent again. He needs his schooling badly enough, but I suppose it is hard to get through the heavy snow up yonder."

But toward evening, when school was over, Peter generally managed to get through and pay a visit to Heidi.

After a few days the sun showed its face again, and shone down on the snow-covered earth; it did not stay long, however, but soon withdrew behind the mountains, as though it did not like what it be-

held as well as it did the green fields and gay blossoms of summer. But in the evening the moon rose round and bright, and all night long shed its light on the vast snow-fields, and the next morning the mountains glistened and glittered from summit to base like gigantic crystals.

When Peter jumped out of his little window, just as he had on the preceding days, a surprise awaited him; instead of sinking into the soft snow, he struck so hard that he rolled over and over, and before he was aware of it, slid on down the mountain like a sled without a rider to steer it. When at length he was on his feet again, he stood dazed for a moment, and then stamped on the crusty snow with all his might, as if to assure himself that what had just happened to him was really possible. He was not mistaken; no matter how hard he struck the icy surface with his heel, hardly a splinter broke off. The whole mountain was frozen over as hard as a rock. Nothing could have pleased Peter more, for he knew very well that the snow must be like this before Heidi could come to see them. He hurried back to the house, swallowed the glass of milk that his mother had set on the table for him, thrust a piece of bread into his pocket and said hastily:—

"I must be off to school."

"That's right," said his mother approvingly. "Go, and study hard."

Peter now crawled through the window, for the door was blocked by the mass of frozen snow in front of it; then he drew his sled out after him and, seating himself on it, shot like lightning down the mountain side.

When he reached Dörfli, just at the point where the road continues downward to Mayenfeld, he sped on, for it seemed cruel both to himself and the sled to bring the ride to a sudden end. So he let the sled go on until it stopped of its own accord far down in the valley below. Then he got off and looked around to see where he was. So great had been his speed that he had been carried quite a distance beyond Mayenfeld. When he discovered this he concluded that it was useless to try to go to school, as it must have begun by this time, and it would take him an hour to climb back to Dörfli. So he did not hurry, and reached there just as Heidi had got home from school and was about to sit down to dinner with her grandfather.

When Peter had anything on his mind he always got rid of it as quickly as possible, and so, as he stepped into the room, he shouted:—

"We've got it at last!"

"What, Goat-general, what have you got? That sounds very ominous," said the grandfather.

"The ice crust," explained the boy.

"Oh, oh, now I can go to see the grandmother!"

was Heidi's jubilant cry, for she had understood Peter's meaning at once.

"But why didn't you come to school? You could get down easily enough on your sled," she added reproachfully, for she thought it could not be right to stay away from school if it was possible to get there.

"Was too late; sled carried me down too far," was Peter's explanation.

"That's what I call desertion," said the grandfather, "and all who are guilty of it should be taken by the ears. Do you understand?"

In terror Peter drew his cap down over his ears, for if there was any one in the world of whom Peter stood in awe, it was the Alm-Uncle.

"And a leader, such as you are, ought to be doubly ashamed to run away like that," continued the Uncle. "What would you say if for no reason whatever your goats would run off, one here and another there? And when you called them back they would not come and do what was best for them; what would you do then, I say."

"Beat them," was Peter's ready reply.

"And suppose a boy acts just like an unruly goat and then gets a whipping for it, what would you say to that?"

"Serves him right," was the answer.

"Very well, now you know what to expect, Goat-

colonel; the next time that your sled carries you beyond the school house when you ought to be in it, come here to me, and I will give you what you deserve."

At last it dawned upon Peter that he himself was the runaway boy who ought to be punished like an unruly goat. The grandfather's comparison had quite convinced him of his guilt, and he cast anxious glances into all the corners of the room to see whether in one of them he could discover what under like circumstances he would use for his goats.

But now the old man said pleasantly:—

"Come, sit down and eat dinner with us; when you have finished you can take Heidi with you; toward evening you must bring her back, and then you can have supper with us."

This unexpected turn of affairs was a great relief to Peter, and a grin of delight spread his features in all directions. He needed no second invitation, but sat down at once beside Heidi. But the child wanted nothing more; so rejoiced was she at the prospect of seeing the grandmother that she could not swallow another mouthful. The large potato and piece of toasted cheese still left on her plate she gave to Peter, who was being helped from the other side by the grandfather until his plate had the appearance of a small moun-

tain. His courage did not fail him, however, and he began his attack upon it at once.

Heidi ran to the closet to get the little cloak Klara had sent her; wrapped in this, and with the hood drawn over her head, she was ready to start. Taking her place beside Peter's chair she stood waiting until the last morsel on his plate had disappeared in his mouth; then he said: "Now come!" whereupon the two started off together.

Heidi had much to tell Peter about Swanli and Bearli; how on their first day in the new stable neither of them would eat a mouthful, and that they had done nothing but hang their heads all day long without so much as making a sound. When she had asked her grandfather why they did so, he had told her that they felt just as she had in Frankfort, for it was the first time in all their lives that they had been down from the Alm. To this Heidi added:—

"And you have no idea how dreadful it is to feel so, Peter."

In this way the two children had nearly come to their journey's end before Peter had said a word; indeed, he seemed so deep in thought that he could not even listen to Heidi as usual. Just before they reached Peter's door he stopped suddenly, and turning to Heidi said doggedly:—

"I would rather go to school than go to the Alm-Uncle and get what he said."

Heidi heartily agreed with him, and eagerly sought to strengthen him in his good resolve.

Within the hut they found Peter's mother sitting alone at her mending; the grandmother had not left her bed for the past few days. It was too cold for her, and she was not feeling very well besides, her daughter explained. This was something entirely new for Heidi who had never seen the grandmother anywhere but in her place in the corner. She ran to the bed-room at once, and found her blind friend lying on her narrow cot, wrapped in the gray shawl, and only one thin blanket over her.

"God be praised!" cried the grandmother as soon as she heard the child's tripping footstep on the floor. Ever since autumn a secret fear had haunted her, and it always grew stronger when Heidi remained away a little longer than usual. Peter had told her of the gentleman from Frankfort who had spent so many days up on the pasture with Heidi, and had always found so much to say to her; from this the grandmother concluded that the stranger had come to take Heidi away with him, and although the gentleman finally went home alone, she still feared that at any time some one might be sent from Frankfort to take the child back there.

Running to the bedside Heidi asked anxiously:—

"Are you very sick, grandmother?"

"No, no, child; I feel the cold in my limbs, that

is all," was the grandmother's re-assuring reply as she patted the child's cheek lovingly.

"Then shall you be well again just as soon as it grows warmer?" Heidi inquired further.

"Yes, yes; God willing, even sooner, so that I can get to my spinning again. I had hoped to try it to-day; but to-morrow I shall surely be at it again," said the grandmother confidently, for she had noticed the child's anxiety.

Her answer quieted Heidi who was quite alarmed, for she had never before found the grandmother in bed. As the child now looked at her friend more closely, a surprised and puzzled expression came to her face; after a while she said:—

"In Frankfort the ladies wear shawls when they go out to walk. Did you think yours was meant to be put on when you go to bed?"

"You see, child, the bedclothes are rather thin, and I should be cold if I did not have the shawl to wrap around me. I was so glad to get it."

"But, grandmother," Heidi began again, "your bed goes down hill where your head lies, instead of going up as it should."

"I know it, child; I can feel it very well," said the grandmother as she tried to find a more comfortable position on the pillow that lay as thin as a board under her head. "You see the pillow was never very thick, and I have had it so many years that it has grown thin."

"Oh, if only I had asked Klara to let me take my bed home with me from Frankfort!" Heidi exclaimed regretfully. "It had three great, thick pillows, one on top of the other, so that I couldn't sleep, and always slipped down to where it was flat; then I had to crawl up again, because that is the way to sleep in Frankfort. Could you sleep that way, grandmother?"

"Yes, surely; the pillows would keep me warm, and it is so much easier to breathe when the head is high," was the grandmother's answer as she raised her head a little uneasily, as though in search of a higher place. "But let us not talk about that any longer; I have so much to be thankful for, so much that many old and sick people do not have—there is the good roll I get daily, and this beautiful warm shawl here, and that you come to see me so often, Heidi. Will you read something to-day?"

Heidi ran out and soon came back with the old hymn book. Then she found one beautiful hymn after another; she knew them all now and was glad to read them again, for it seemed a long time since she had heard the beautiful verses she had learned to love.

The grandmother lay with folded hands, and as she listened, her face that had looked so careworn and sad, grew bright with a happy smile as though she had heard glad tidings.

Suddenly Heidi paused.

"Grandmother, are you well already?" she asked.

"I am happy, Heidi; what I heard has made me happy. Please read it to the end, will you?"

The child read on, and when she came to the last lines,—

"When my eyes grow dim and fail me,
Shed thy light into my heart;
And may angel voices hail me
As for home from earth I part,—"

the grandmother repeated them over and over, and a look of joyful anticipation came to her face. It made Heidi glad to see her so, and at the last words all the beauty of the day on which she had come home rose before the child, and she said joyously:—

"Grandmother, I know how good it is to go home."

The grandmother made no reply; but she had heard the child's words, and the look of joy that Heidi had been so glad to see remained on her face.

After a while Heidi said:—

"It is growing dark, grandmother, and I must go home; but I am so glad that you feel better."

The grandmother took the child's hand, and holding it in her own, said:—

"Yes, I am content again; even should I have to remain in bed, I shall be happy. You do not know, my child, and no one can who has not felt it, how dreadful it is to lie day after day, hearing not a word for hours, and seeing nothing, not even a ray of sunlight. Then gloomy thoughts come one after another, and it seems as though there were no light anywhere, and one might as well give up. But such beautiful words as you have just read shed a new light into the heart that brings its own joy with it."

So saying, the grandmother let go of her little friend's hand, and as soon as they had bade each other good-night, Heidi hurried out of the room, pushing Peter before her, for it had grown quite dark. But out of doors it was almost as light as day, for the moon had risen and was shining brightly on the white snow.

Peter got his sled ready and, seating himself on it, waited for Heidi to take the place behind him. Then, with a push, they were off, flying down the mountain-side like two birds on the wing.

When later in the evening Heidi lay on her soft, high bed of hay in her corner behind the stove, she thought of the grandmother with her head so low and uncomfortable; and then the child remembered all the poor blind woman had said about the light that the words of the beautiful hymn shed



"When my eyes grow dim and fail me."

into her heart. And she wished that the grandmother might hear those words every day, for then there would at least be a little while each day when she would be happy. But Heidi knew very well that it might be a whole week, perhaps even two, before she could get up there again; and that seemed so sad to her that she tried harder and harder to think of some way by which the grandmother might have those words read to her every day. All at once it came to her, and she was so glad, and so eager to begin on her new plan that she could hardly wait for the morning to come.

Suddenly Heidi sat bolt upright in bed, for, so absorbed had she been in her thoughts about the grandmother that she had quite forgotten to send her evening prayer up to the dear Lord in heaven, and she was quite shocked, for she meant never to forget that again.

After she had prayed earnestly for her grandfather and the grandmother and herself, she sank back on her soft pillow of hay and slept sweetly and peacefully until the morning light waked her.

CHAPTER XIX

THE WINTER CONTINUES

ON the following day Peter's sled brought him to the school-house door just in time. He had his luncheon in a bag, for it was a custom of the school that when the village children went home to dinner at noon, the pupils who lived far away all seated themselves on the school-room table, and with their feet on the benches, spread their luncheon on their knees and proceeded to eat it. Their recess lasted until one o'clock when school began again. Whenever Peter had passed a day at school, he rewarded himself at its close by going to the Alm-Uncle's house to pay a visit to Heidi.

To-day, when he appeared as usual in the Uncle's great kitchen, Heidi darted toward him, for she had been looking for him.

"Peter," she cried, "I have thought of something!"

"Tell it," said he in return.

"Now you will have to learn to read," announced the little maid.

"I've just got through," was the reply.

"No, no, I don't mean that way. I mean so

that you will know how when you get through," Heidi explained eagerly.

"Can't," said the boy.

"No one believes you when you say that, and neither do I," said Heidi very decidedly. "The grandmamma in Frankfort knew long ago that it wasn't true, and told me not to believe it."

Peter was overcome with amazement at this piece of news.

"I will teach you how to read; I know a way," Heidi went on. "You are surely going to learn to read now, and when you know how, you are to read a hymn or two to the grandmother every day."

"It's no use," growled Peter.

This stubborn resistance to something that was good and right and which she herself had so much at heart made Heidi indignant. With flashing eyes she stood before the boy and said threateningly:—

"Let me tell you what will happen to you if you won't learn to read. I have heard your mother say that she must send you to Frankfort to learn something, and I know very well where the boys go to school there; Klara showed me the great big house when we were out driving. But they don't go to school there only while they are boys, but even after they have grown to be men. I have seen them myself. And don't think for a

moment that they have only one master there, as we have here, and such a kind one. No, indeed! I have seen whole rows of them go into the great school-house together, and they were all dressed in black as if they were going to church, and had tall black hats on their heads, as high as that"—and Heidi held out her hand to show the height of the hats above the floor.

A shudder ran down Peter's back.

"And then you will have to go in there among all those gentlemen," continued the eager child earnestly, "and when your turn comes and you can't even read, and you make mistakes in spelling, you will see how all those gentlemen will make fun of you. That will be much worse than Tinette, and to have her laugh at one is bad enough."

"Then I'll learn," said Peter half sadly, half angrily.

Instantly Heidi was pacified.

"There, that is right; and now let us begin at once," said she cheerily, as she pushed Peter toward the table and then hurriedly got together the necessary materials for the lesson.

In the large package that Klara sent, Heidi had found a tiny book that had pleased her very much; it was a booklet of the A B C's with jingling verses, and it was of this that the child had thought at once when the plan to teach Peter her-

self had entered her mind on the night before.

The two children now sat down at the table, their heads bent over the little book, and the lesson began.

Peter had to spell out the words of the first verse, once, twice and even a third time, for Heidi intended that he should know it perfectly and be able to read it fluently. At last she said:—

"You don't know it yet. Let me read the whole verse to you, for when you have heard what it ought to be, it will be easier for you to spell it out."

And Heidi read:

> "If your A B C you do not know,
> Away to be punished you must go."

"I won't go," said Peter obstinately.

"Where?" asked Heidi with some surprise.

"To be punished," was the reply.

"Then you must hurry and learn these three letters to-day so that you will not have to go," urged Heidi.

Hereupon Peter went at it again with renewed zeal, and patiently repeated the three letters over and over until Heidi said:—

"There, now you know these three."

The impression which the threatening little verse had made on Peter had not escaped Heidi, and she

shrewdly determined to deepen it as a spur to future effort. So she said:—

"Wait a minute, and I will read a few more verses, so that you may know what more to expect."

And she began to read very slowly and distinctly:—

"If you do not learn D, E, F, G,
In a sorry plight you soon will be.

And who forgets his H, I, K,
A painful forfeit has to pay.

If L and M you do not learn,
With grief and shame your cheeks will burn.

Now quickly get N, O, P, Q,
Else something ill will come to you."

Here Heidi paused to look at Peter who was sitting beside her as quiet and still as a mouse. He was so overcome by all these threats and mysterious terrors that he could not move a muscle, and sat staring at Heidi in abject fear. The boy's terror touched the child's kind heart, and she quickly sought to give him new courage by saying:—

"You mustn't be afraid, Peter, for if you come down here every afternoon and learn as well as

you did to-day, before long you will know all the letters, and then those dreadful things will not happen. But you must come every day, and not only once in a while, the way you go to school. You needn't stay at home when it snows; it won't hurt you."

Peter promised to do as he was told, for his terror had made a most docile and willing boy of him. Then he went home.

Peter did exactly as Heidi had ordered, and every afternoon wrestled manfully with a new letter or two, urged on by the terrible warning that the accompanying verse contained.

During the lessons Heidi's grandfather often sat in the room with the children, contentedly smoking his evening pipe, and as he listened to teacher and pupil, the corners of his mouth often twitched as though he found it difficult to keep a straight face.

When Peter's great exertions were over he was usually invited to stay to supper, in which he found ample compensation for the terror with which the day's verse had filled him.

In this way the winter days passed one after another, and on not one did Peter fail to come for his lesson, so that toward the end of the winter he had really made considerable progress with the alphabet.

But the verses never ceased to vex and torment

him. It was now time to struggle with the U, and Heidi read:—

"Whoe'er confounds the U and V
Will go where he'll not like to be."

whereupon Peter growled:—

"But suppose I won't go?"

Nevertheless he applied himself with great earnestness, as though he feared that from somewhere behind him a hand might be laid on his shoulder to carry him off to where he would not like to be.

On the next afternoon Heidi read:-

"If W is not learned at all,
Behold the switch upon the wall."

At this Peter looked all round the room and then said scornfully:—

"There isn't any."

"Very true; but do you know what grandfather keeps in the big chest?" asked Heidi: "A stick almost as thick as my arm, and should he get that out we need only make the verse read: 'Behold the stick upon the wall.'"

Peter knew the heavy stick of hazelwood very well, and instantly gave all his attention to the W before him.

The next day's verse ran:—

"And if the X you should forget,
Nothing to eat that day you'll get."

Hereupon Peter sent a searching glance over to the closet where he knew the bread and cheese were kept, and then said in a tone of resentment:—

"But I am not going to forget the X."

"Oh, very well; if you won't forget it we can learn another letter to-day," was Heidi's quick suggestion. "Then there will only be one left for you to learn to-morrow."

Although Peter did not say that he was willing, Heidi began at once:—

"And should you falter at the Y,
You'll be laughed at by and by."

Instantly the black-clothed gentlemen of Frankfort rose before Peter, each one wearing a high black hat on his head, and a smile of derision on his face. Without another word the boy turned to the Y and wrestled with it until he knew it so well that even with his eyes closed he could see just how it looked.

On the following day when Peter presented himself before Heidi he held his head rather high, for he was aware that there was now only one letter to be learned. When Heidi read:—

"And he who stammers over Z
Soon with the Hottentots will be."

Peter said jeeringly:—

"Very likely, when no one so much as knows where they live!"

"To be sure somebody knows where they live! Grandfather knows. I will run and ask him. He has not gone far, only to see the Herr Pastor," and before she had finished speaking Heidi was half way to the door.

"Stop!" shouted Peter in great alarm, for in imagination he saw the Alm-Uncle and the pastor both coming in haste to take him by the collar and hurry him off to the Hottentots, for he was well aware that he did not know the Z.

On hearing his terrified cry, Heidi stood still, and asked in surprise:—

"What ails you?"

"Nothing! Come back! I want to learn," Peter brought forth between gasps of terror. But Heidi herself had grown curious to know where the Hottentots lived, and was bent upon asking her grandfather. But Peter called after her in so desperate a tone that she yielded and turned back; she required something from Peter in return, however. Not only did he have to study and repeat the Z until it was impressed on his mind for

all time, but he had to begin to make syllables, so that by the time the lesson was over he had taken a long step forward.

Thus, day by day a little more progress was made.

The ice crust on the snow melted, and day after day new snow fell on the old, and in this way three weeks passed in which there was not a day when Heidi could go to see the grandmother. This made the child more eager than ever in her work with Peter in the hope that he would soon be able to take her place at reading the hymns. And so at last there came a day when, upon leaving Heidi, Peter went home and on entering the house, declared:—

"I can do it!"

"What, Peterli? What is it you can do?" asked his mother expectantly.

"Read," was the reply.

"Is it possible! Did you hear that, grandmother?" exclaimed Brigitte.

The grandmother had heard, and was as much surprised as her daughter.

"Now I must read a hymn; Heidi said so," was Peter's next announcement. His mother quickly took down the book, and the grandmother rejoiced that she was to hear some of the cheering words for which she longed. Peter seated himself at the

table and began to read. His mother sat down beside him and listened attentively; at the end of each verse she exclaimed in wonder:—

"Who would have thought it!"

The grandmother also followed each verse with eager attention, but she said nothing.

On the day following this great event it happened that Peter's class was called upon for an exercise in reading. When it came Peter's turn, the master said:—

"Shall I pass you, as usual, Peter, or will you try to—I cannot say read—try to stammer over a line or two?"

Peter began and did not hesitate or stop until he had read three lines.

The master laid his book down and looked at Peter in mute astonishment, as though he had never before heard anything so wonderful. At last he said:—

"Peter, a miracle has been wrought upon you! During all the time that I worked with you in untold patience, you did not so much as learn to put two letters together; and now, that I have entirely, although very reluctantly, given up the attempt as utterly hopeless, you suddenly stand before me knowing not only the alphabet, but how to read, and quite well too. Who can work such miracles in these days, Peter?"

"Heidi can," was the boy's prompt answer.

In great surprise the master looked over to where Heidi was sitting very demurely in her seat without the least appearance of a miracle-worker.

The master continued:—

"I have moreover observed a great change in you, Peter. Whereas formerly you used to remain away from school a week at a time, yes, even several weeks, now you are never absent a day. Who can have worked such a change for the better in you, Peter?"

"The Alm-Uncle," was the reply.

With increasing wonder the master's eyes wandered from Peter to Heidi, and back again to Peter.

"We will try it again," he said cautiously; and Peter was given three more lines on which to prove his ability. But it was really so, he had learned to read.

As soon as school was over the master hastened to the parsonage to tell the pastor what had happened, and how good an influence Heidi and her grandfather were having in the village.

Every evening Peter now read a hymn aloud as Heidi had ordered, but no more; he never offered to read a second hymn, nor did the grandmother ever ask him to do so.

To mother Brigitte, Peter's new accomplishment

was a source of daily wonder, and on many an evening when the hymn had been read and the reader tucked away in bed, she would say to the grandmother:—

"We cannot be thankful enough that Peterli has learned to read so nicely; who can say now what he may not make of himself?"

To this the grandmother once answered:—

"Yes, it is a good thing that he has learned something, but I shall be very glad if the dear Lord sends an early spring so that Heidi can soon come again. The hymns do not seem at all the same when Peter reads them. So often something is left out of the verses and I have to think what it is, and by the time I have found it, he is so far ahead that I cannot follow the thought, and so I do not get as much good out of the hymns as when Heidi reads."

Truth to tell, Peter suited the reading to his own convenience; whenever he came to a word that looked very long, or suggested other difficulties, he left it out altogether. "For," thought he, "what difference can two or three words more or less in a verse make to grandmother; there are plenty left." And so it happened that in the hymns that Peter read there was a wonderful scarcity of nouns.

CHAPTER XX

DISTANT FRIENDS ARE HEARD FROM

MAY had come again. From every mountain height the well-filled streams leaped merrily downward, glad of their new found freedom. The bright spring sunshine lay on the upland pastures which were green once more; the last of the snow had melted away, and here and there in the fresh young grass the first flowers of spring were raising their bright little heads, tempted forth by the sun's warm rays. Above, in the pine trees, the joyous spring breezes whispered among the great branches, and shook down the old dull needles to make place for the fresh young green with which the old trees were about to deck themselves. High overhead, with out-spread wings, the old eagle sailed majestically through the blue sky, while the warm sunshine streamed down on the Alm-hut and all around it, stealing into every crevice and corner, and drying the ground where the dampness had lingered longest, so that everywhere it offered a dry and inviting seat.

Heidi was in her dearly loved mountain-home again. In her joy she ran hither and thither, not

knowing where it was most delightful. Now she listened to the wind as it came rushing down from the great cliffs above with a deep, mysterious sound that grew louder and stronger with every moment, until it whistled away into the pine trees and bent and shook them with a shout of delight; and Heidi joined in the shout while she was blown hither and thither like a leaf before the wind.

Then away she ran to the sunny place in front of the hut where she sat down on the ground and peered into the grass to see how many flower cups had opened, or would soon do so. Here, too, there were myriads of flies and other tiny creatures to watch as they crawled or hopped or danced about merrily in the pleasant sunshine, rejoicing in its warmth; and Heidi rejoiced with them and drank in the sweet spring air, fragrant with the odors of the newly quickened earth, and thought that never before had she seen the Alm so beautiful. The swarming little insects must have been as happy as Heidi herself, for as they hummed and buzzed about, they seemed to be singing in their own way: "On the Alm! On the Alm, the beautiful Alm!"

From the shop behind the hut came the sound of busy hammering and sawing. Heidi hearkened in that direction; she knew and loved the sound well, for it was one of the earliest associations of

her life on the Alm. In a moment she was on her feet and away to the shop to learn what her grandfather was making. Before the door of the shop stood a brand-new chair all ready for use, while her grandfather's skilful hands were at work on a second one.

"Oh, I know what you are making," cried Heidi gaily. "We shall need them when the visitors from Frankfort come. That one is for the grandmamma and the one on which you are at work is for Klara, and then—then there will have to be one more," the child continued with evident misgiving; "or do you think, grandfather, that Fräulein Rottenmeier will not come with them?"

"That is more than I can tell," said the grandfather; "but it will be safer to have one ready for her so that if she comes we can ask her to sit down."

Heidi looked thoughtfully at the little wooden chairs without backs, and pictured to herself how the housekeeper would look sitting in one of them. After a while she said with a doubtful shake of her head:—

"Grandfather, I don't believe she would sit in one of them."

"Then we will invite her to take a seat on the sofa with the beautiful green-sward cover," was her grandfather's quick answer.

While Heidi was still wondering where the beautiful sofa with the green-sward cover might be, the air was suddenly filled with whistling and shouting and the cracking of a whip, sounds that told their own story to Heidi. She was out of the shop in a twinkling, and the goats gathered around her as they came hopping and skipping down the mountain side. They must have been quite as happy to be back on the Alm as was Heidi herself, for they leaped higher and bleated more merrily than ever before, and Heidi was pushed first to one side and then to the other in their efforts to get near her and show their delight.

But Peter thrust them all aside, one to the right and another to the left, for he had something for Heidi. When he had made his way to her side he held out a letter. "There!" he cried, leaving Heidi to guess the rest. She was much surprised, and asked wonderingly:—

"Did you find a letter for me up on the pasture?"

"No," was the answer.

"Well, where did you get it, Peter?"

"Out of the lunch bag."

This was true enough, for on the previous evening the post-master of Dörfli had given him the letter to take to Heidi, and Peter had at once stowed it away in his empty lunch bag. In the

morning he put his bread and cheese into the bag and then, as usual, took his goats to pasture. Although he had seen both Heidi and her grandfather when he came for their goats, he did not think of the letter again until, when he had finished his lunch of bread and cheese and was gathering up the crumbs, it fell into his hand.

Heidi read the address with great interest and then ran to where her grandfather was at work; swinging the letter high over her head, she cried gaily:—

"From Frankfort! From Klara! Don't you want to hear it right away, grandfather?"

He wanted very much to hear it, and Peter, who had followed close behind Heidi, also prepared to listen. Placing his back against the door-post he leaned heavily against it, for with this strong support he found it easier to follow Heidi as she read.

"Dear Heidi—

"Everything is packed, and in two or three days we are to start, just as soon as papa is ready; but he cannot go with us as he has to go to Paris first. The doctor comes to see us every day, and before he gets the door open he calls through the keyhole: 'Away! Away! To the Alps!' He can hardly wait for the time to come when we shall be off. You have no idea how much he liked the Alm him-

self. All through the winter he was at our house nearly every day, saying that he had to come because he had so much to tell me. Then he would sit down beside me and tell me all about the days he spent with you and your grandfather up on the Alm, about the flowers and the mountains and the great stillness on the heights so far above the villages and roads, and about the fine fresh air. Almost always he would end by saying: 'Up yonder everybody must get well.' And he himself is no longer the sad doctor he was for a while, but seems real young and merry again.

"Oh, how glad I shall be to see you and everything up on the Alm, and to get acquainted with Peter and the goats. But first we are to go to Ragaz where I am to take the baths for six weeks according to the doctor's orders. The rest of the summer we will spend in Dörfli from where I can be carried up to the Alm to spend every pleasant day with you. Grandmamma is coming too, and will stay as long as I do. But just think of it, Fräulein Rottenmeier does not want to go! Nearly every day grandmamma says: 'How do you feel about the trip to Switzerland now, my good Rottenmeier? If you would like to go with us, do not hesitate to say so.' Fräulein Rottenmeier always declines with great politeness, saying that it was more than she could expect. But I

know why she does not want to go. When Sebastian returned from his journey home with you, he gave us a most dreadful description of your mountain, telling how on all sides there are precipices and deep chasms into which there is danger of falling, while frightful cliffs overhang the narrow path which is so steep that at every step up there is danger of falling backward down the mountain, and that, though it may do well enough for goats, no person can travel on it without risk to his life.

"I saw her shudder as he told about it, and since then she has lost all desire for a trip to the Alps. Tinette, too, has been frightened off, and will not go with us; so grandmamma and I are coming alone. Sebastian is to go with us as far as Ragaz, where he will turn back.

"It is so hard to wait until I shall be with you.

"Farewell, dear Heidi. Grandmamma sends a thousand loving greetings.

"Your sincere friend,

"KLARA."

When Peter had heard the letter he sprang away from the door-post against which he had been leaning and swung his whip so angrily and recklessly to right and left that the goats all took to their heels and made off down the mountain in longer and wilder leaps than they had ever taken

before. Peter rushed down after them, striking first to one side and then to the other with his whip as though venting his rage on some unseen foe before him. It was the prospect of visitors from Frankfort that was the foe which had so roused Peter's anger.

Heidi's happiness and joyful expectation would not let her wait longer than the next day to go down and tell the grandmother all about it—who were coming from Frankfort, and especially who were not coming. This was all of the greatest interest to the grandmother, for she had heard so much about the people in Frankfort, and she sympathized with Heidi in all that the child did and thought.

It was early in the afternoon when Heidi started on her way down the mountain, for now that the bright long days had come again she could go on these visits by herself. The ground was so dry that it was a pleasure to run down hill, and the merry May breezes, sweeping down from above, sent her even faster on her way.

The grandmother was not in bed now, but sat at her spinning wheel in her accustomed corner. Her face wore a troubled look, for ever since the previous evening her heart had been heavy, and all night long anxious thoughts had kept her awake. Peter had come home in a state of fierce excite-

ment, and from his disconnected and angry exclamations she had learned that Heidi and her grandfather were expecting a whole company of people from Frankfort. Why they were coming he did not know, but the grandmother had her own thoughts about it, and it was these thoughts that had troubled her and disturbed her sleep.

Suddenly the door opened and Heidi came bounding into the room and straight to the grandmother's side, where she sat down on the footstool that always stood there ready for her. She began at once to tell her friend the great news, and in her eagerness to leave nothing untold she grew more and more excited over it herself. But suddenly she stopped in the middle of a sentence to ask with great concern:—

"What is the matter, grandmother? Doesn't it make you the least bit glad to hear about it?"

"Oh yes, yes, Heidi; I am glad for your sake, because it will give you so much pleasure," said the grandmother, trying to look a little more cheerful.

"But, grandmother, I can see that it troubles you. Do you think that after all Fräulein Rottenmeier will come with them?" asked Heidi, growing a little anxious herself.

"Oh, no, no, child! It is nothing, nothing at all," was the grandmother's reassuring answer.

"Let me hold your hand a while Heidi, that I may feel quite sure that you are still here. It will no doubt be the very best thing for you, but it does seem more than I can bear."

"I do not want what is best for me if it is more than you can bear, grandmother," said Heidi with so much firmness that her poor old friend was seized by a new fear, for she did not doubt that the people from Frankfort were coming to take Heidi home with them; for now that the child was quite well again there was no reason why she should not go back with them. This was the grandmother's great fear, but she saw that it would not do to let Heidi know it, lest, out of pity for her, the child should refuse to go, and that must not be. In her trouble she sought for help, but not long, for she knew of but one that never failed.

"I know something that will cheer me, Heidi, and bring me the thoughts I love," she said presently. "Read me the hymn that begins: 'The Lord will guide thee.' "

Heidi was so familiar with the old hymn book now that she opened to the page at once, and began to read in a clear voice:

"The Lord will guide thee,
From danger hide thee,
Send thee what is best and right.

In pain and sadness,
Be this thy gladness:
Thou art precious in his sight."

"Yes, yes, that's it; that is just what I wanted to hear," said the grandmother with a sigh of relief as the look of anxiety gradually left her face.

Heidi looked at her thoughtfully for a moment; then she said:—

" 'What is best and right' means what will make us happy, doesn't it, grandmother?"

"Yes, yes, child; that is what it must mean," said the grandmother, nodding her head in assent; "and since the dear Lord will make it right in the end we can feel quite safe and need not worry. Read it again, Heidi, that we may learn it well and not forget it."

The child read and re-read the verse, for she, too, felt the joy of the promise that it gave.

When evening had come, and Heidi was on her homeward way up the steep mountain path, one little star after another came twinkling forth overhead, and shone down on her as though to shed a new joy into her glad young heart; and Heidi had to stand still and look up at them now and again, until at last, when she saw all the countless stars beaming down on her so joyously, she called up to them:—

"I know why we can all feel so glad and so safe;

it is because the dear God knows and sends us all what is best and right!"

And still the stars shone and shimmered, and seemed to beckon Heidi on her way until she reached her grandfather's door, where he, too, was standing looking up at the stars, for seldom had he seen them so beautiful.

Not only the days, but the nights, too, were clear and bright in this beautiful month of May, more so than in many years past; and often in the morning the grandfather stood looking in wonder at the sun as it rose in a clear sky with all the splendor in which it had set the night before. Then he would exclaim: "'Tis a year of unusual sunshine, and all the herbs and grasses will be more than ordinarily strength-giving. Take care, Goat-general, that your high-jumpers do not get the better of you, with all this high living!"

Whereupon Peter would swing his switch in so brave a fashion that it sang in the air, and the look on his face said plainly enough: "I haven't the least fear of that!"

And so the pleasant month of May passed, with its tender green; and June came, bringing the long, long bright days with their warm sunshine that waked all the many-hued blossoms until the whole mountain-side was gay with them, and far and wide the air was filled with sweet odors. And

June, too, was drawing to a close when one morning Heidi came bounding out of the hut where she had just finished her morning duties. She meant to run quickly to the pine trees and listen awhile to their music, and then go up a little farther where stood the big bush of red centauries heavy with its weight of blossoms that looked so lovely with the sunlight shining through their transparent cups. But she had hardly turned the corner of the hut when she gave a loud cry that brought her grandfather out of his shop to see what was the matter, for this was something unusual for Heidi.

"Grandfather, oh, grandfather!" cried the child in a frenzy of excitement, "Come here! Come over here! Look! Look!"

Her grandfather followed the direction of the excited child's finger and saw a strange procession, the like of which had surely never before been seen on the mountain, come slowly up the steep path. First of all came two men carrying an open bath-chair between them; in it sat a young girl wrapped in many shawls; next came a horse on which rode a stately lady who looked at everything about her with great interest while she talked to the young guide at her side. Then followed an empty wheel-chair which a sturdy young fellow was pushing up the steep incline while its usual occupant was being taken up more comfortably in the bath-chair

ahead. Last of all came a carrier whose pack of blankets, shawls and fur rugs towered far above his head.

"They're coming! They're coming!" shouted Heidi, dancing up and down with delight.

It was indeed the long expected guests. Slowly they came nearer and at last reached the door where the men set down their burden and the two little friends greeted each other with rapture. Now the grandmamma's horse was at the door, and as soon as she had dismounted Heidi ran to her and received a loving greeting. Then the old lady turned to the Alm-Uncle who had come forward to welcome his guests. The two needed no introduction, but met like old friends, for each had heard so much of the other.

As soon as the first words of greeting were said the grandmamma exclaimed with great enthusiasm:—

"What a glorious situation you have, my dear Uncle! Who could have imagined its beauty! Many a king might envy you for it! And how well my little Heidi looks! As fresh as a rose!" she continued, patting the child's round cheeks. "What wonderful beauty all about us! And what do you think of it, Klara, my child?"

Klara looked around her in perfect delight; it was all far beyond anything she had imagined, for never before had she seen anything like it.



"Grandfather, come over here! Look! Look!"

"Oh, it is beautiful, beautiful!" she exclaimed over and over. "I had no idea it would be like this! Oh, grandmamma, I should like to stay here!"

Meanwhile the Uncle had moved the wheel-chair nearer and, taking a soft blanket or two from the pack, he spread them on the seat; then he turned to the little group of friends and said:—

"If the little girl were in her usual chair she would be more comfortable, for I fear she will find the one she is in a little hard."

Without waiting for help he lifted the sick girl in his strong arms and placed her gently in the seat he had prepared for her. Then he covered her with a shawl, carefully tucked it in around her, and arranged the cushions under her feet as comfortably as though all his life long he had taken care of invalids with aching limbs. The grandmamma looked on in astonishment.

"My dear Uncle," she exclaimed at length, "if I knew where you learned to care for sick people, I would send every nurse to the same school to learn her business. How well you do it!"

The Uncle smiled a little sadly.

"It comes from practice rather than from study," he remarked as the look of sadness on his face deepened; for out of the dim past there rose before him the suffering face of a man whom he

had often seen reclining in a chair like this one, and whose limbs had been so maimed that he was quite helpless. It was the face of his captain, whom he had found lying wounded on a battlefield in Sicily after a fierce fight, and had carried to a place of safety; after that the sick man would let no one else wait on him, and the Uncle had remained with him and nursed him with tender care until his great sufferings were ended. Now the little invalid before him brought back those days to the old man, and he felt he must care for her and give her all the loving service he understood so well.

The sky stretched bright and cloudless above their heads and over the hut and the tall pine trees and far away to where the shining gray cliffs pierced its deep blue. Klara could not look at it enough; she was in rapture over all the beauty around her.

"Oh, Heidi, if I could only run with you round the hut and to the pine trees yonder!" she cried with a great longing. "How I wish I could go everywhere with you and look at all the many things I know so well but have never seen!"

Now Heidi made a great effort and really succeeded in pushing the chair on, and soon it moved quite easily over the smooth turf. Under the pines she stopped, and here, too, Klara's wonder

knew no bounds, for never before had she seen anything like these towering trees, clothed with branches from top to base where they grew longest and thickest and nearly swept the ground.

The grandmamma had followed the children, and she, too, looked at the old trees in wondering admiration, not knowing which she thought more beautiful, the swaying tops that sighed in the breeze far overhead, or the strong trunks that rose as straight as pillars with their great spreading branches that told of all the many, many years in which they had looked down into the valley below, where the people came and went, and all things changed, while they themselves remained ever the same.

After a while Heidi wheeled the chair to the goat-stable where she threw the door wide open so that Klara might see everything within. But here there was not much to see, as the little occupants were not at home. With great regret Klara called out:—

"Oh, grandmamma, if I could only stay until Swanli and Bearli and all the other goats come down from the pasture with Peter! I shall never see them if we always have to go back as early as you said we should; and that is too bad!"

"My dear child, let us enjoy all that is so lovely about us now, and not think of what we cannot

have," said the grandmamma as she walked beside the chair which Heidi was already pushing on toward new scenes.

"Oh, the flowers!" Klara exclaimed now; "whole bushes covered with beautiful red blossoms! And look at all the nodding little bluebells! Oh, if I could only go over there and pick some!"

Instantly Heidi was among the flowers gathering whole handfuls, which she brought to the little invalid. Laying them in her lap, she said:—

"But these are nothing, Klara. Wait until you can go up to the pasture with us; then you will open your eyes! There you will see many, many bushes of the red centauries all close together, and ever so many more bluebells than there are here, and thousands of the bright yellow rockroses that make the ground look as though it were strewn with gold. Then there are those flowers with the big leaves that grandfather calls sun's eyes, and the brown ones with the little round heads of which I have told you and that smell so sweet. Oh, it is so beautiful where they grow that when I am sitting beside them I never want to get up, it is so lovely."

Heidi's eyes grew bright with eagerness to behold again all the splendor of which she was telling, and Klara's gentle blue eyes beamed in response as her enthusiasm kindled at Heidi's glowing description.

"Oh, grandmamma, do you suppose I shall ever see them? Do you think I can get up as far as that?" asked Klara longingly. "Oh, if I could only walk, Heidi! Then we would climb about the Alm together, and I would go everywhere with you!"

"I will wheel you everywhere," was Heidi's consoling reply, and to show how easily she could do it she pushed the chair so vigorously round the corner of the hut that its speed almost carried it down the mountain side. But the grandfather was standing near and stopped it just in time.

While the others had been making their visit to the pine trees, the grandfather had not been idle. Beside the bench that always stood in front of the hut he had set the table with the necessary chairs around it, so that now everything was ready for the excellent dinner whose appetizing odors rose from the steaming kettle and the toasting fork over the glowing embers. In a few minutes the grandfather had placed everything on the table around which the little company was soon seated.

The grandmamma was delighted with this charming dining-room with its view far down into the valley and away off over all the mountain tops into the deep-blue sky beyond. A gentle breeze fanned the cheeks of the merry party as they sat at dinner, and made sweet music in the pine-tops, as if for their special benefit.

"It is glorious up here! Never before have I seen anything like it!" were some of the grandmamma's exclamations of delight. "But what is this?" she added in surprise. "Are you really beginning on a second piece of toasted cheese, Klara, my dear?"

It was, indeed, the second piece of golden brown cheese that lay on Klara's slice of bread, as she assured her grandmother that it tasted so good, better than everything put together at Ragaz, and then bit with relish into the savory morsel.

"That's right! That's right!" said the grandfather with a nod of approval. "It's the effect of our mountain breezes; they make up for all that's wanting in the cooking."

And so the merry meal went on; the grandmamma and the Alm-Uncle got along famously together, and their conversation grew more and more animated. They shared so many opinions regarding people and events, as well as life in general, that it seemed as though they had been friends for years. In this way the time passed so quickly that the grandmamma was surprised when she glanced up and saw how long the shadows had grown.

"We must be getting ready, Klara, my dear; the sun is in the west, and the men will soon be here with your chair and the horse."

Klara's happy face grew long at this announcement.

"Oh, let us stay an hour longer, or two," she pleaded earnestly. "We haven't been in the hut yet, nor seen Heidi's bed, nor anything in there. Oh, if the day were only ten hours longer!"

"It isn't wise to wish for what we cannot have," remarked the grandmamma. But she, too, wanted to go into the hospitable little home. They left the table at once and the Uncle's steady hand pushed the invalid's chair to the door; but, alas! it would go no farther, for it was much too wide to go through. The Uncle did not hesitate long, however, but took Klara in his strong arms, and carried her into the hut.

Hither and thither went the grandmamma, seeing everything, and much amused at all the novel housekeeping arrangements that looked so neat and orderly.

"That is your bed up in the loft, isn't it, Heidi?" she asked, and was on her way up the little ladder without a moment's hesitation.

"Oh, what delightful fragrance!" she exclaimed. "It is no wonder that you sleep well in such a chamber!"

Now she discovered the round loophole, and was soon peering through it, while the grandfather, with Klara in his arms, came climbing up the ladder, and Heidi scrambled gaily after.

Soon they were all standing around Heidi's bed of hay, and as the grandmamma looked down at it with a thoughtful air, she drew in deep breaths of the fragrant air about her. Klara was delighted with Heidi's sleeping-room.

"Oh, Heidi, what a lovely place you have! From your bed you can look right out into the blue sky, and you can smell the sweet hay, and hear the pine trees singing outside. Oh, never before have I seen such an entertaining bed-room!"

With a glance at the grandmamma the Alm-Uncle now said:—

"I have a little plan that I should like to try if the grandmamma approves it, and feels she can trust me. It seems to me that if the little girl could stay up here with us awhile she would gain new strength, and might get quite well again. I saw a number of shawls and blankets that were brought up; with these we can make an excellently soft bed here in the loft; and in regard to the care of the little girl, there need be no anxiety, I will undertake that myself."

Klara and Heidi shouted with joy while a look of glad surprise came into the grandmamma's sunny face.

"My dear Uncle, you are a man after my own heart!" she exclaimed. "What do you suppose I was just thinking? I was saying to myself: 'If

the child could stay up here awhile she would gain wonderfully. But what a care and anxiety, besides the inconvenience, she would be to her host.' And here you are offering to do it all just as though it were a trifle. I thank you, my dear Uncle, I thank you from the bottom of my heart!" and grasping the old man's hand she gave it a hearty shake, which he returned with a pleased and happy look on his face.

The Uncle immediately began his newly assumed duties. First he carried Klara down stairs to put her into her comfortable chair in front of the hut, while Heidi came dancing on behind them, finding no leap high enough to express her joy. Then he gathered up all the shawls and fur rugs in his arms and, turning to the grandmamma with an amused smile, said:—

"It is fortunate that the grandmamma prepared for her little jaunt up the mountain as though she were bound on a winter's campaign; the things will be useful."

"My dear Uncle," retorted the grandmamma, as she joined him, "precaution is an excellent virtue and prevents many a misfortune. Any one who makes a journey across your mountains without being caught in a storm of wind and rain, or even a cloud-burst, has reason to be grateful, and we are very thankful. But my bundle of wraps

will not come amiss, as you have just said, so we are fully agreed on that point."

With this merry banter the two had climbed up the ladder to the loft, and were now standing in front of the fragrant bed of hay on which they spread the rugs and blankets, one on top of the other, until in the end it looked more like a little fortress than a bed.

"Now let us see whether a single whisp of hay dares poke its way through," said the grandmamma, as she pressed her hand down on the soft surface on all sides; but not one could be felt through the many thicknesses. Satisfied with her work, she made her way down the ladder again and joined the children who, with beaming faces, were sitting close together making their plans for all the days that Klara was to spend on the Alm. But how many of these were there to be? This was the question which the grandmamma was immediately called on to answer. But she referred the children to the grandfather who was just approaching, and who, she said, could tell them better than she could. When the question was now eagerly put to him, he replied that four weeks would show whether the pure mountain air would do for Klara what was expected of it. On hearing this the children broke forth into louder cries of joy than before, for such a long time together exceeded even their greatest hopes.

The men who had carried Klara's chair, and the guide with the horse were now seen coming up the mountain. The former was sent back at once empty-handed.

As the grandmamma mounted her horse, Klara exclaimed gaily:—

"Oh, grandmamma, we need not say 'good-bye,' for you will come up every few days to see how we are getting on, and that will be such fun, won't it, Heidi?"

Heidi, whose pleasant surprises seemed to have no end to-day, could only show her glad approval by a joyous leap into the air.

When the grandmamma was seated on her steady horse the Uncle took it by the bridle and led it carefully down the steep mountain path. Although the grandmamma protested that this was not at all necessary, the Uncle insisted on going with her all the way to Dörfli, declaring that the mountain was so steep that the ride down was not without danger.

Since the grandmamma was now to be alone, she decided not to stay in quiet little Dörfli, but to return to Ragaz, and from there make an occasional visit to her little granddaughter.

The grandfather had not yet returned when Peter and his goats came bounding down from the pasture. No sooner had the little creatures seen

Heidi than they crowded toward her, and in an instant not only she, but Klara, too, in her chair beside her, was in the midst of the throng. In their eagerness the goats pushed forward one after the other, each in turn raising a curious head to look at the stranger, and so giving Heidi an excellent opportunity to name and introduce them to her friend.

And so, in the shortest time possible, Klara had the long desired pleasure of seeing sweet little Snowhopli, the valiant Goldfinch and the grandfather's well-kept pair, besides all the others from the least all the way up to the big Turk himself. Peter, however, stood on one side and cast threatening glances at the happy little visitor.

When the children looked merrily over at him, and called out a friendly: "Good evening, Peter!" he answered never a word, but swinging his switch so fiercely over his head that it almost snapped in two, he rushed down the mountain with his goats scampering after him.

The close of Klara's happy day of new experiences was as delightful as the rest.

As she lay on the great soft bed up in the hayloft, and Heidi was just climbing up to her place beside her, she looked through the round loophole and saw all the twinkling stars beyond. With an exclamation of delight, she cried:—



The goats pushed forward one after the other.

"Oh, Heidi, see, it is just as though we were in a high carriage, driving straight into the sky!"

"So it is, Klara! And do you know why the stars are so happy and are always twinkling down at us so merrily?" asked Heidi.

"No, I don't; why is it?" asked Klara.

"Because, up there, so near to the dear God in heaven, they can see how well He has planned everything for the people down here on earth, so that they need never be anxious, because everything will surely come right in the end. That is why they are so glad. See how they twinkle! That is to tell us that we, too, ought to be glad. But you know, Klara, we mustn't forget to say our prayers, and ask the dear God to remember us when He makes all his wise plans, so that we, too, may feel safe and never be afraid of anything."

Hereupon the two children sat up in bed and, folding their hands, said each her own little prayer. Then Heidi laid her head on her round arm and went fast asleep. But Klara lay awake a long time, for never before had she seen anything so wonderful as this strange couch on which the stars shone down.

Indeed, in all her life she had seen but little of the stars, for she had never been out of doors at night, and at home, in the big house in Frankfort, the heavy curtains were always drawn long before

the stars came twinkling forth. And that was why, when now she closed her eyes, she felt she must quickly open them again to see whether the two great stars were still shining and twinkling down at her as Heidi had said.

But they were always there, and it seemed to Klara that she would never grow weary of looking up at them as they sparkled and glittered so wonderfully. But after a while her eyes grew heavy and closed in spite of her, and the stars she saw were the stars of dreamland.

CHAPTER XXI

FURTHER EVENTS ON THE ALM

THE sun was just rising from behind the great cliffs and shedding its first golden rays on the little hut and down into the valley beyond. The Alm-Uncle was standing before the door as he did every morning; he had been gazing thoughtfully at the scene before him, as slowly the gray mists rose and floated away from the jagged peaks, followed before long by the heavier mists of the valley; then gradually the dark shadows melted away and the land awoke to another day.

Brighter and brighter grew the light morning clouds until at last the glorious sun came forth and flooded cliff and wood and hill-top with its golden light.

Then the Uncle turned, and going into the hut, climbed softly up the little ladder to the loft. Klara had just awakened and was looking in wide-eyed wonder at the bright sunbeams that came glancing through the round loophole and, as they fell on her bed, danced merrily there. She did not know where she was, nor what these strange things were all around her. But the next moment she saw Heidi sleeping soundly beside her, and at the

same time heard the grandfather's cheery voice asking:—

"Well, did you have a good night, or are you still a little tired?"

Klara assured him that she was not at all tired, and that after she had fallen asleep she did not waken all night long. The grandfather was well pleased with this report and began at once to wait upon Klara so well and so handily that one might have thought that his whole life had been spent in caring for invalid children and making them comfortable.

Before long Heidi, too, opened her eyes and looked in astonishment at Klara who was already dressed and being carried away in the grandfather's arms. Heidi, who did not like being left behind, was on her feet in an instant, dressing as quick as lightning; then away she went, down the ladder and out of the door. In front of the hut she stopped in amazement to see what her grandfather was doing now.

On the foregoing evening, after the children had gone to bed, he had found it necessary to devise some way of bringing the wheel-chair under cover, as the door of the hut was much too narrow to admit it. A happy thought had come to him, and he had carried it out at once. Removing two boards from the side of the shop he had pushed the chair

through the wide opening thus made, and had then replaced the boards without fastening them firmly.

Now he had carried Klara into the shop and, after seating her in the chair, was just pushing it through the opening when Heidi came upon them and opened her eyes in wonder. After wheeling Klara to the sunny place in front of the hut, he left her there and went to the goat-stable, while Heidi quickly ran to her little friend's side.

The fresh morning wind played about the children, bringing with every gust the spicy odor of the pine trees with which the air was laden. Klara breathed deeply and leaned back in her chair with a feeling of strength she had never had before.

And it was no wonder, for never before had she breathed fresh morning air such as this that came sweeping down to her from pine-clad mountains, so cool and fragrant that every breath was a delight, while the lovely bright sunshine, that was never hot at this great height, fell on her hands and warmed them, and lay on the dry and grass-grown earth at her feet. That it could be as lovely as this up on the Alm she had never dreamed.

"Oh, Heidi, if I could only stay up here with you forever and ever!" she cried, turning first one way and then another to catch the sunshine and breeze from every side.

"Now you see that I was right when I told you that grandfather's Alm is the loveliest place in all the world," was Heidi's joyous reply.

Her grandfather now came to the children with a bowl of foaming warm milk in each hand, one for Klara and one for Heidi. "It will do you good," said he with a pleasant nod at Klara. "It is from Swanli, and will give you strength. Good health to you! Now drink it up!"

Klara had never tasted goat's milk and, before drinking it, sniffed at it a bit to find out what it was like. But when she saw Heidi place the bowl to her lips and drain it with a relish that left her no time to breathe, she thought it must be good indeed. Taking a sip, she found it as sweet and pleasant to the taste as though it had been spiced and sugared, and she drank and drank until her bowl, too, was empty.

"To-morrow you shall have two," said the grandfather, as he saw with satisfaction how well Klara had followed Heidi's example.

Peter and his flock now came galloping up the mountain, and while Heidi was quickly pressed forward into their midst by the eager greetings of the merry creatures, her grandfather called Peter to one side, where the boy could better hear what he had to tell him; for whenever the goats saw Heidi they seemed to vie with one another to see

which of them could bleat the loudest to express their love and delight.

"Attention! And listen carefully to what I tell you," said the Alm-Uncle. "From now on you are to let Swanli feed where she likes. She has a way of finding the richest grasses and herbs; so when you see her climbing up higher, follow after with the other goats, for good food won't hurt any of them; and if she wants to go beyond where you usually take your flock, be sure you do not call her back, but keep up with her for she knows more about it than you do, and a little lively climbing will give you a good appetite. She is to have the very best of food so that she will give extra fine milk. Why are you looking over there so fiercely as though you would like to bite somebody? There is no one there who will do you any harm. Now, forward, march! And remember what I told you."

The Uncle's word was law to Peter, and he moved on at once, but it was plain to be seen that he had something on his mind, for after every few steps he turned to look back with fiercely rolling eyes. In their effort to follow him and yet keep close to Heidi the goats pushed the child along with them and so brought her nearer to Peter, which was just what he wanted.

"You'll have to come with us," he called down

into the throng with a threatening glance; "you'll have to come with us, if we are to keep up with Swanli."

"No, I can't," Heidi called back. "It will be a long, long time before I can go with you again; not while Klara is here. But we will go up together one day; grandfather has promised to take us."

So saying Heidi made her way out from among the goats and ran back to Klara. But Peter, on hearing it, shook both fists so savagely at the wheel-chair that the goats quickly jumped to one side. The boy was after them at once, and ran on for quite a distance without so much as looking back once; indeed, he did not look back until he was out of sight, for he feared the Alm-Uncle might have seen him, and he would rather not know what the old man thought of his fist-shaking.

Klara and Heidi had so many plans for the day that they hardly knew what to do first. Heidi proposed that they write to the grandmamma first of all; for they had promised to send her a letter every day. When she had left Klara up on the Alm she had not felt at all certain that the child would be content to remain, or that the new mode of life would agree with her, and so she had made the children promise to write her how they spent each day, for in this way she not only learned how

her little granddaughter was faring, but could also tell when she was needed up there, and in the meantime could remain at her hotel in peace of mind.

"Shall we have to go indoors to write?" asked Klara who was willing enough to give her grandmamma the desired report, but felt so happy where she was that she did not want to go elsewhere.

But Heidi knew how to manage. Running into the hut she soon returned laden with all her school materials and the little three-legged stool besides. Her reader and copybook she put into Klara's lap that she might write on them, while she herself sat on the stool with the bench for a table, and soon both children were busily engaged in telling the grandmamma what had happened. But after every sentence Klara laid down her pencil to look around her awhile, for it was altogether too lovely to write. The breeze was no longer cool, but soft and caressing as it fanned her cheek and then was away to whisper among the branches of the old pine trees. Myriads of merry little insects danced and buzzed in the clear air, and far and near a deep stillness lay on the sunny land. The great peaks looked down in silent majesty on the wide valley at their feet, where peace and quiet reigned unbroken save for a herd boy's merry yodle now and then, which the echoes caught and returned

softly and more softly until it died away among the distant cliffs.

The morning passed, the children hardly knew how, and here was the grandfather coming with his savory, steaming kettle ready for dinner. As yesterday, he had set the table in front of the hut. "For," said he, "our little guest is to stay out of doors as long as there is a ray of light in the sky." When the pleasant meal was ended, Heidi wheeled Klara's chair into the shade of the pine trees, where the children had agreed to spend the afternoon telling each other all that had happened to them since their parting in Frankfort. Although nothing unusual had occurred, still Klara had much to tell about the people at home whom Heidi knew so well.

So the children sat under the tall pine trees chatting gaily, and the more eagerly they talked, the louder sang the birds overhead, as though the feathered folk would gladly have joined in the merriment below. And thus, all unawares, the evening came, and with it the nimble-footed troop from up on the pasture. One and all came scampering down the mountain-side, their driver close behind them with a grim and forbidding look, and his forehead drawn together in a frown.

"Good-night, Peter!" cried Heidi, when she saw that he did not mean to stop. And "Good-night,

Peter!" called Klara's sweet voice after him as he rushed on after his goats without so much as turning his head.

As Klara watched the grandfather leading dainty little Swanli into the stable to be milked, she was seized with such a desire for the pleasant drink that she could hardly wait until it was brought her. She was quite surprised at herself.

"Isn't it curious, Heidi?" said she. "As long as I can remember I have eaten only because I knew I must; everything tasted of cod-liver oil, and many a time I have wished: 'Oh if only I did not have to eat!' And now I can hardly wait until your grandfather brings me the milk."

"Oh, I know what that is very well," said Heidi with great understanding, for she remembered the days in Frankfort when everything she ate choked her and would not go down. But Klara still marvelled; forgetting, however, that she had never before spent the entire day out in the fresh air, and especially such pure and bracing air as that which she had breathed to-day.

When the grandfather came with his two little bowls, she took hers with an eager "Thank you," and drained it so quickly that it was empty even before Heidi's.

"May I have a little more?" she asked, as she returned it.

The old man nodded approvingly, and taking Heidi's as well as hers, disappeared in the hut.

When he returned, each little bowl was not only full, but had on it a thick cover of very different stuff than that of which covers are usually made.

Early in the afternoon the grandfather had taken a walk to the herdsman's hut in green and grassy Maiensäss, where the richest and yellowest butter is made, and had brought a fine big ball of it home with him. Now he had cut two large slices of bread and spread them thickly with some of this delicious golden butter, and laying one on each little bowl gave them to the children for their supper. They both seized them at once and bit into them so eagerly that the old man stood still and watched them as they ate, for it pleased him.

That night, when Klara had gone to bed intending to look up at the twinkling stars for a while, she fared as Heidi did—her eyes closed before she was aware of it, and she slept until morning, more soundly than ever before in her life.

In this happy way the next day passed, and the following one, but the third brought a great surprise to the children. As they were sitting in front of the hut they saw two strong carriers coming up the mountain, each with a heavy burden on his back, which proved to be a bed completely fitted out, from mattress to dainty white coverlet. One of the men brought a letter from the grandmamma,

telling the children that the two beds were for Klara and Heidi, and were to take the place of the couch of hay and shawls; that from this day forth Heidi was always to sleep in a regular bed, for one of them was to be taken down to Dörfli for the winter, while the other was to remain in the hay-loft, ready for Klara whenever she might come again. Then the grandmamma praised the children for writing her such long letters, and encouraged them to continue their daily reports to her, so that she might know all they were doing, and so share their enjoyment just as though she were with them.

Meanwhile the grandfather had gone to the loft and, after folding the shawls and blankets, he laid them aside, and tossed the hay that had served Heidi as a couch on to the great heap at the other end of the loft. Then he went down to help the men carry the little twin-beds up the ladder. When they were both set up, he pushed them close together to a place where both the little occupants could look out of the round loophole to get a glimpse of the stars by night and of the first rays of the sun in the morning, for he knew what a delight this was to the children.

The grandmamma passed these days pleasantly at the hotel in Ragaz, much pleased at the good report she received daily from her little granddaughter.

Klara's delight in her new mode of life grew

with every day, and she could not say enough of the grandfather's kindness and ever watchful care, nor of how merry and amusing Heidi was—even much more so than in Frankfort. Her first waking thought, she told her grandmamma, was to thank God that she was still with her friends on the Alm.

Every day the grandmamma rejoiced anew over the good news, and decided that since all was going so well she might put off her trip up the mountain a little longer, which she was not sorry to do, for she had found the ride up the steep ascent and down again rather trying after all.

The grandfather must have taken a deep interest in his little charge, for hardly a day passed on which he did not think of something new by which she might gain more strength. Every afternoon now he climbed far up among the cliffs, and always returned with a big bunch of herbs that were sweet with an odor as of spicy cloves and thyme; indeed, so tempting was their fragrance that in the evening, when the goats returned from the pasture, they all stood on their hind legs and bleated in their eagerness to get into the stable where the grandfather had laid the herbs, for they knew the odor well. But the door was securely fastened, for the old man had not taken a hard long climb up the mountain for the sake of giving

the whole flock of goats a delicious meal without any trouble to themselves. The herbs were all for Swanli, that her milk might be even richer and more nourishing than usual. The pretty little creature showed how well she thrived under this special care, for she held her head so high, and her eyes were so bright that it was a pleasure to look at her.

It was now nearly three weeks since Klara had come to visit her friends up on the mountain, and on the last few mornings when the grandfather had carried her down to seat her in her chair, he had asked each time:—

"Will my little friend not try to stand for just a moment?"

And to please him, Klara had always made the effort, although she had clung to him and cried out, "Oh, it hurts me so!" But each day he had let her rest her weight on her feet a little longer.

Not for years had there been so charming a summer in the Alps. Each morning the sun rose in splendor and ran its course through a cloudless sky, while all the flowers opened their little cups wide to drink in its warmth, and in return put on their brightest hues, and shed their sweetest perfume on the air; and when it set in the evening it threw a crimson glow on the tall cliffs, and tinged the great snow-field with softest pink, and then vanished in a sea of golden glory.

Heidi never wearied of describing all this beauty to Klara, for only from the greater heights could it be seen in all its grandeur. And then with special ardor she would tell of her favorite spot up yonder, close to the high precipice, where at this season the shining golden rockroses grew in such abundance, and where the bluebells were so thick that it looked as though the grass had turned blue, while close beside them were great bunches of the flowers that looked like little brown heads and smelled so sweetly that when she was sitting beside them she felt as though she never wanted to leave them.

The children were sitting under the pine trees, and Heidi had just been telling Klara again of the lovely flowers and the beauty of the setting sun and gleaming cliffs, when such a longing to see it all seized her that she jumped up and ran to the shop where she saw her grandfather at his carving, and called out to him:—

"Oh, grandfather, won't you take us up to the pasture to-morrow? Oh, it is so lovely up there now!"

"It's a bargain," was the grandfather's reply, "if our little friend here will do me a favor in return by trying very hard to stand awhile before she goes to bed this evening."

In great joy Heidi ran back to tell the good

news to Klara who gladly promised to try to stand just as often as the grandfather wished, for she was eager to take the long-desired trip to the beautiful pasture-lands. Heidi was so overjoyed at the delightful prospect that as soon as she saw Peter coming down the mountain with his goats, she ran to meet him shouting: "Peter! Peter! we are going up with you to-morrow to spend the day!"

But the only reply that Peter made was to growl like an angry bear while he struck a vicious blow at the unoffending Goldfinch who happened to be the goat nearest him. But thanks to the little creature's nimble feet, which carried him at one bound quite over Snowhopli's back, he escaped the whip which whizzed harmlessly through the air.

That night Klara and Heidi were filled with the most delightful anticipations as they climbed into their pretty little beds. So intent were they on the many plans for the morning that they decided to stay awake all night to talk about them. But hardly had their heads touched the soft pillows when their chatter suddenly ceased, and in her dreams Klara beheld a wide, wide field that was as blue as the sky with bluebells, and Heidi heard the eagle cry: "Come! come! come!" as he circled far overhead.

CHAPTER XXII

THE UNEXPECTED HAPPENS

VERY early the next morning the Alm-Uncle stepped out of his door to look around and see what sort of day it was going to be.

All the highest peaks were flushed with a pink and golden light, while a fresh breeze gently swayed the great branches of the pine trees. Everywhere was the promise of the coming day.

For a while the old man stood looking on in thoughtful silence as the light crept downward from the high peaks to the green mountain slopes and, driving the dark shadows before it, flooded the valley with a rosy shimmer, until at last peak and vale alike were bright with the morning's golden light. The day had come.

The Uncle now went into the shop and brought the wheel-chair out ready for the trip up the mountain; leaving it in front of the door he climbed up into the loft to wake the children and tell them what a beautiful day it was.

Hardly had the Uncle disappeared in-doors when Peter came climbing up the mountain. His goats did not stay trustfully near him now as they used to, keeping either a little behind or in front

of him, or trotting along by his side as they journeyed up the mountain together; but instead, they kept at a shy distance, and now and then made quick leaps to one side or the other to escape Peter's stick with which he struck out madly, and where it fell it left a smarting welt behind. Peter had reached the highest point of rage and bitterness, for he had not had Heidi to himself for weeks now. In the morning, when he passed by on his way up to the pasture, her grandfather was always just bringing the strange girl down to seat her in her chair, and Heidi seemed to have eyes only for her; in the evening, when he returned, the chair with its occupant was standing under the pine trees, and Heidi was still engaged with the stranger. Not once during the whole summer had she gone to the pasture with him, and now that she was going to do so, the stranger in her chair was coming too, and all of Heidi's time would be given to her. Peter foresaw it all, and it was this that so enraged him.

Suddenly he caught sight of the chair standing there so haughtily, as he thought, on its four wheels, and he looked at it angrily as at an enemy who had done him an injury and would do him many more. He cast a cautious glance around; all was quiet and no one was in sight. Like a madman he rushed at the chair, seized it and

pushed it with such angry force toward the slope of the mountain that it dashed downward and in a moment was out of sight.

Then Peter ran after his goats as fast as his legs could carry him, never stopping to look around until he had reached a tall blackberry bush behind which he could conceal himself, for he did not wish to be seen by the Alm-Uncle. The fate of the chair was of great interest to him, however, and the blackberry bush was fortunately situated. By leaning forward from behind it he could look down the whole mountain slope, and should the Uncle appear at his door, Peter had only to draw back quickly to be entirely out of sight. He peered out from behind the bush, and what a sight met his eyes! Far below him the object of his hatred was rushing onward with ever increasing speed; now it turned a somersault, then another, and yet another; then, hurled high into the air, it was dashed to the ground again, and rolling over and over, sped on to certain destruction. Already it was going to pieces, for one after another, legs, arms and pieces of the cushions were being torn off and thrown high in air.

The sight filled Peter with a fierce delight; he leaped high into the air and laughed aloud; then he stamped on the ground for very joy, and finished by dancing around in a circle. Then he returned

to the blackberry bush and took another glance down the mountain, after which there were renewed shouts of laughter and more dancing. Peter was almost beside himself with joy at the destruction of his enemy, for he foresaw a whole train of pleasant consequences which must follow. In the first place the strange girl would have to go home since now there was no way of moving her about; this would leave Heidi alone again and she would go up to the pasture with him as before; then she would give all her attention to him when he stopped at the hut on his way to or from the pasture, and so they would go back to all their pleasant old ways. But Peter forgot that every evid deed bears bitter fruit.

Now he saw Heidi come jumping out of the hut and run to the shop; behind her came her grandfather carrying Klara. The shop door was wide open and the two boards had been taken down, so that the light fell full into every corner. Heidi looked everywhere, then ran round the corner, and came back with a look of consternation on her face. By this time her grandfather was at the door.

"How is this, Heidi?" he asked. "Did you take the chair away?"

"I am looking everywhere for it, grandfather. Didn't you say that you had left it at the door?" said the child, still looking in every direction.

Just then the wind, which had been growing stronger, rattled the shop door and suddenly threw it back against the wall with a bang.

"Grandfather, the wind did it," cried Heidi, and her eyes grew big at the thought of it. "Oh, grandfather, if the chair has been carried all the way down to Dörfli, it will take so long to get it back here that we can't go up to the pasture at all to-day!"

"If it has gone as far as that, it will never come back at all, for it will be in a thousand pieces," said her grandfather, stepping round the corner and looking down the mountain side. "But it does seem strange," he added, as he looked back at the distance the chair had to pass over in turning around the corner of the hut before it reached the descent.

"Oh, that is too bad!" cried Klara; "now we cannot go, and perhaps I shall not get there at all, for I must go home if I have no chair. Oh, it is too bad, too bad!"

But Heidi turned to her grandfather with a look of perfect confidence, and said:—

"You can find some way, can't you, grandfather, so that it will not be as Klara says, and she will not have to go home?"

"At present we will go up to the pasture as we had intended; afterward I will see what can be

done," was the grandfather's reply, and upon hearing it the children burst into a shout of delight.

Going into the hut he soon returned with an armful of shawls which he arranged in the sunniest place and then carefully seated Klara on them. Then he gave the children their breakfast of milk, after which he went to the stable to get Swanli and Bearli.

"I wonder why that fellow is so long in coming," said the grandfather, half to himself, for Peter had not given his usual morning whistle.

Taking Klara in one arm and the shawls in the other, the grandfather started on his way.

"There, now forward," said he; "the goats will follow us."

Nothing could have pleased Heidi better; putting one arm around Swanli's neck and the other around Bearli's she kept close behind her grandfather, while the goats almost crushed her between them in their loving effort to show their joy at having her go with them once more.

As they came to the end of their journey they were surprised to see groups of goats here and there quietly grazing, while in their midst lay Peter stretched full length on the ground.

"What does this mean, lazybones?" the Uncle called out to him. "If you pass us by again, you

will get something that will help you to remember us!"

At the sound of the familiar voice Peter sprang to his feet.

"There was no one up," was the reply.

"Have you seen anything of the chair?" was the Uncle's next question.

"Of what chair?" asked Peter doggedly.

The Uncle said no more. Finding a sunny spot that was sheltered from the wind by a great rock he spread out the shawls and seated Klara on them.

"Is that comfortable?" he asked.

"As comfortable as my chair," she answered gratefully; "and here I am in the most beautiful place on earth. Oh, it is lovely, Heidi, lovely!" she exclaimed, looking all around.

The grandfather laid the bag containing the children's lunch in a shady place, and told Heidi to be sure to remember it at noon, and that Peter was to give them as much milk as they could drink, but Heidi was to make sure that he took it from Swanli.

After telling the children to enjoy themselves and not to expect him until evening, as he was going down the mountain to look for the chair, the grandfather bade them good-bye.

The sky was deep blue with not a cloud to be seen; the great snow-field opposite glistened and

shimmered as with a thousand stars of gold and silver; the tall gray cliffs held their heads aloft as they had in ages past, and gazed calmly down into the valley below; far overhead the eagle poised on outstretched wings, and from the greater heights a refreshing breeze swept down over the sunny slopes.

The children were too happy to speak. Now and then one of the goats would come and lie down beside them to rest for a while; it was affectionate little Snowhopli who came oftenest to nestle against Heidi, and the pretty creature would probably have spent the greater part of the day there had not others of the flock come and driven her away. In this way Klara became so well acquainted with them all that she never mistook one for the other, for each had its own peculiar face and ways.

They soon grew quite familiar with Klara and rubbed their heads against her shoulders, which was their way of saying that they knew and liked her.

And so the hours slipped away; while thinking of the flowers Heidi was seized with a great deside to climb a little farther up to where they grew so abundantly and see whether there were as many and as beautiful ones as there had been the summer before. Not until evening, when her grandfather had come back, could there be any thought of

going there with Klara, and then most of the flowers would have closed their little cups for the night. Heidi's longing to see them grew so strong that she could resist it no longer. Turning to Klara she asked rather timidly:—

"You will not be offended if I run off and leave you for a little while, will you, Klara? I should so like to see how the flowers look. But wait—" she cried, for a happy thought had occurred to her. Running to one side, she pulled several handfuls of the sweet herbs that grew there and, as Snowhopli came running toward her, she put one arm around the little creature's neck and led her to where Klara was sitting.

"There, now you will not be left alone after all, for here is Snowhopli," said Heidi, as she gently pressed the goat down, which Snowhopli must have understood very well, for she nestled down at Klara's side at once. The herbs that Heidi had gathered she threw into her friend's lap; Klara was well pleased and said that she would quite enjoy staying alone with the little goat, for she had never before done anything like that, and she hoped Heidi would stay to look at the flowers just as long as it pleased her.

So Heidi ran off and Klara began to feed Snowhopli, holding out one leaf at a time, while the little creature grew more and more confiding, and

nestled close to her new friend as she nibbled the leaves slowly from between her fingers. She showed very plainly that she enjoyed lying there so comfortably and under kind protection, for when she was out with the flock she had to endure many a hard knock from the larger and stronger goats.

To Klara it seemed very delightful to be sitting far up among the mountains, all alone save for the helpless creature at her side, whose eyes looked so pleadingly up to her own. A great desire rose in the little girl's heart to be able not only to take care of herself, but to help others as heretofore she had always been helped. And as she sat there, so many thoughts came to her—thoughts that she had never had before, and with them a desire to live on and on in the beautiful sunshine, and to do something that would give others pleasure, as she was now doing for little Snowhopli. A strange new gladness filled her heart, for it seemed as though all she had known before were going to be different and more beautiful than it had been, and she felt so well and happy that she caught Snowhopli around the neck and cried:—

"Oh, Snowhopli, how lovely it is here! If I could only stay here with you always!"

Meanwhile Heidi had gone to her favorite place and greeted it with a cry of glad surprise, for the

whole mountain slope before her seemed flooded with gleaming gold, so thickly grew the glistening yellow rockroses; over them, great bunches of bluebells nodded in the breeze and the air was filled with a perfume as sweet as the costliest incense. It all came from the little brown flowers whose round heads could be seen here and there among the glistening cups of gold. Heidi stood and looked and drew in deep breaths of the fragrant air. Suddenly she turned and ran back to Klara with such speed that she was quite out of breath when she got there.

"Oh, you must come," she cried in great excitement; "they are so beautiful! It is all so beautiful, and this evening it may not be as lovely as it is now! Perhaps I can carry you; don't you think I could?"

Klara looked at her excited little friend with some surprise; but she shook her head. "No, no," she said. "How can you think of it? Why, you are much smaller than I am. Oh, if I could only walk!"

A new idea must have come to Heidi, for her eyes were eagerly seeking something. Up yonder, where the children had first seen Peter stretched on the grass, he was now sitting looking down at them. There he had sat for hours staring at the two little girls below him as though he could not

trust his eyes. Had he not destroyed the hateful chair that there might be an end of it all, and the strange girl be obliged to go home because she could not be moved about? And yet, only an hour later, here she was sitting on the grass beside Heidi. He could not understand it, and yet it must be so, for, look away as often as he would, every time his eyes returned to the spot, there she was.

Heidi now looked up at him.

"Come down here, Peter!" she ordered.

"Won't come," Peter called at her.

"But you must; come, I can't do it alone and you must help me! Come quickly!"

"Won't come," Peter replied again.

Heidi now ran a little way up the slope toward the boy; then she stopped, and looking at him with flashing eyes, cried:—

"Peter, if you don't come down here right away, I will do something that will make you very sorry. You may depend on it!"

These words gave Peter a sudden and painful feeling of alarm. A great anxiety seized him, for he had done a wicked deed which he wanted no one to know. So far he had felt only joy at the thought of it; but Heidi's words made him fear that she knew all about it and would tell her grandfather, and of all persons in the world, the Alm-

Uncle was the one he feared the most. If he should learn what had happened to the chair! Peter gasped at the thought of it. He rose and went toward Heidi who was waiting for him.

"I am coming; but then you mustn't do what you said," Peter begged, and looked so terrified that Heidi pitied him.

"No, no, I will not do it," she assured him. "But now come on; you needn't be afraid of what I want you to do."

When they reached Klara, Heidi directed him to take her firmly by one arm while she herself took the other, and then they were to raise her to her feet. This went easily enough, but the next was more difficult. Klara could not even stand; how could they hold her and move her forward too? Besides Heidi was too short to support her with her arm.

"Put one arm around my neck, very firmly—this way," said Heidi; "and with the other take Peter's arm and lean on it very hard. Then we can carry you."

But to give his arm to any one was something entirely new to Peter, and when Klara took it, he held it down against his side as stiff as a poker.

"That isn't the way, Peter," said Heidi very decidedly. "You must make a ring with your arm—so; then Klara must put hers through it, and

bear her weight on it firmly, and you mustn't let yours give way, no matter what happens; then I think we can move her along."

But although Heidi's orders were carried out exactly, little progress was made. Klara was no light burden, and her carriers were so illy matched. On one side her support was low and on the other high, which gave her a very uncertain feeling.

Klara tried her own feet a bit, putting out first one and then the other, but each time quickly drew them back again.

"Try just once to set your foot down real hard," suggested Heidi; "perhaps after that it will not hurt you so much."

"Do you think so?" asked Klara a little doubtfully. But she followed Heidi's advice and took one firm step, and then another, although each one forced a low cry of pain from her. Then she tried the other foot again, setting it down a little more softly.

"Oh, it did not hurt so much this time," she cried joyfully.

"Try it again," urged Heidi eagerly.

Klara did so, once, twice and a third time. Suddenly she exclaimed excitedly:—

"I can, Heidi! Oh, I can! Look, look! I can take one step after another!"

"Oh, oh! Can you really take steps yourself?

Can you walk now? Can you really walk? Oh, if grandfather would only come! Now you can walk, Klara! You can walk, you can walk alone!" cried Heidi over and over again in the greatest joy.

Although Klara leaned heavily on her support at either side, the three children could easily see that she grew more confident with every step. Heidi was almost beside herself with joy.

"Now we can come up here every day and go where we like," she cried again. "And you can walk as I do, as long as you live, and you will be well, and needn't be wheeled about in a chair any more! Oh, this is the very best thing that could happen to us!"

Klara agreed with her most heartily. There could certainly be no greater joy for her than to be well and able to go about like other people, instead of sitting all day long, a miserable prisoner in an invalid chair.

It was not far to where the flowers grew. The shining golden rockroses were even now in sight, and soon the children were among the great bunches of bluebells between which the sun flecked ground looked so inviting.

"Can't we sit down here?" asked Klara. Heidi was very glad to do so, and the children sat down among the flowers, Klara sitting for the first time on the dry and sun-warmed ground. It was a



Heidi was almost beside herself with joy.

great delight to her. All around her were the swaying bluebells, the shimmering rockroses, and the red blossoms of the centauries while the air was filled with the sweet perfume of the little brown-headed flowers and the fragrant prunelles. It was all so lovely—so lovely!

Heidi, too, as she sat beside her, thought she had never before seen it so beautiful, and the child wondered at the great happiness that filled her heart and made her feel like shouting aloud for very joy. But then she remembered that Klara could walk and was going to be well, and that this great joy had been added to her delight in the loveliness around her. Klara grew quite silent with happiness at all the beauty she saw about her, and above all at the beautiful prospect opened to her by that which she had just succeeded in doing. It seemed almost too great a joy for her heart to hold, and together with the splendor of the sunshine and fragrance of the flowers quite overpowered her and made her speechless.

Peter, too, had grown silent—he lay fast asleep on his bed of grass and flowers. Soft and low the balmy breeze blew from behind the sheltering rocks and whispered among the bushes overhead. Now and then Heidi jumped up and ran hither and thither to where the flowers grew more thickly, or their fragrance was stronger as it was wafted

by the shifting breeze, and everywhere she must sit down awhile.

So the hours passed unheeded.

It was long past noon when a little troop of goats came walking sedately toward the flower-grown spot where the children sat. It was not one of their feeding places, for they did not like to graze among the flowers; it was plain to be seen that this was a delegation headed by Goldfinch and sent out by the other goats to search for their human companions who had so shamefully deserted them and had far overstayed the usual hour, for the goats knew the time of day very well. When Goldfinch spied the three runaways among the flowers, he set up a joyful bleating in which he was instantly joined by all the others, then they all broke into a run and came trotting along, bleating noisily all the while. This waked Peter. He rubbed his eyes hard, for in his dreams he had just seen the wheel-chair with its handsome red leather cushions standing all unharmed before the hut, and even with his eyes half opened he had seen the shining brass nails around the cushions glitter in the sun. But now that he was wide awake he knew that it was only the glistening yellow rockroses at his elbow that he had seen. Again he was seized by the old fear from which he had felt so free at sight of the uninjured chair. Even though Heidi had

promised not to tell of it, Peter still feared that her grandfather might discover the truth. His fear made him very docile and willing to do just as Heidi ordered.

When the three got back to the pasture Heidi ran quickly to fetch the lunch bag and fulfill her promise to Peter, for her threat had been wholly in regard to its contents. She had seen all the good things with which her grandfather had filled it in the morning, and she had looked forward with pleasure to sharing them with Peter. But when he was so obstinate and ill-natured she intended to let him know that he would not get any of her lunch, which Peter's evil conscience led him to misunderstand.

Heidi now took one thing after another out of the bag and made three equal heaps which grew so large that she said to herself with great satisfaction: "Besides his own, he will get all that we can't eat." Then she carried one portion to each of her companions and, with her own in her lap, sat down beside Klara. The three children enjoyed their meal heartily, for the morning's exertion had given them good appetites; nevertheless it happened as Heidi had foreseen; when the two girls were satisfied there was enough left to make another heap for Peter quite as large as his own share had been. Heidi gave it to him, and the

boy ate on steadily and contentedly until every mouthful had disappeared, and then finished with the crumbs. But he did not eat with his usual keen enjoyment; with every mouthful something seemed to rise in his throat and choke him so that he could hardly swallow his food.

It was so late when the children ate their dinner that they had hardly finished when they saw the grandfather coming up after them. Heidi rushed to meet him, for she wanted to be the first to tell him what had happened. But she was so excited over the good news she had to tell that she could hardly find words in which to express it. But her grandfather understood at once what it was she wanted to say, and a look of great joy came into his face. He hurried on to where Klara was sitting and with a happy smile said:—

"So you ventured and were successful, were you?"

Then he raised the little girl to her feet, and putting his left arm around her, held his right one in front of her as a rest for her hand; with this strong support Klara stepped out much more courageously than she had in the morning. Heidi danced and skipped along by the side of her friend, and the grandfather's face wore a look as though some great good fortune had come to him. Very soon he took Klara in his arms, and said:—

"It is best not to overdo; and besides it is time to go home."

Then he turned homeward at once, for he knew that Klara had done enough for one day, and needed rest.

When late in the evening, Peter got down to Dörfli with his goats, he saw a crowd of people gathered about some object on the ground, which they were all so eager to see that they pushed and elbowed one another in trying to get nearer to it. Peter thought he must see what it was, and pushing the people aside first with one elbow and then with the other, he worked his way to the front.

Now he caught sight of it.

There on the ground lay the seat of Klara's chair with a piece of the back still hanging to it. The red leather cushions and shining brass nails were all that remained of its former splendor.

"I saw it when they were carrying it up," said the baker who was standing beside Peter. "It was worth at least five hundred francs, I'll wager. I wonder how it happened."

"The wind may have driven it down; the Alm-Uncle said so himself," remarked Barbel who could not admire the pretty red cushions enough.

"Well, I hope no person is to blame for it," said the baker again; "he would have no easy time. When the gentleman from Frankfort hears of it,

he will have some one look into it and find out how it came about. For my part, I am glad that it has been two years since I was up yonder, for any one who was up there may be suspected."

There was much more said, but Peter had heard enough. Very meekly and quietly he stole out of the crowd and then ran home as fast as his feet could carry him, just as though he feared some one were running after him to catch him. At the baker's words a great fear had taken hold of him, for now he thought that at any moment an officer from Frankfort might come to look into the matter, and then it might be discovered that he was the guilty one, then they would surely take him off to Frankfort and put him into prison. Peter's terror was so great that it made his hair stand on end.

When he reached home he looked very much disturbed and made no reply to what was said to him. At supper he refused his potatoes and soon crawled away to bed, where mother Brigitte heard him groaning in his sleep.

"Peterli has been eating sorrel again," she said; "it must be a pain in his stomach that makes him groan so."

"You will have to give him more bread for his lunch; put in a piece of mine to-morrow," said the grandmother, for she felt sorry for him.

That evening, as the two little girls were look-

ing up at the stars from where they lay in their comfortable beds, Heidi said:—

"Haven't you been thinking all day, Klara, what a good thing it is that the dear God does not give us what we ask, no matter how hard we pray for it, when he knows that something else is better for us?"

"What made you think of that, Heidi?" asked Klara.

"Because, when I was in Frankfort, I prayed so hard that I might be allowed to go home right away, and when my prayer wasn't answered at once, I thought the dear God had not heard it. But, don't you see, if I had gone home right away, you would never have come up here, and then you couldn't have been made well on the Alm."

Klara grew very thoughtful.

"But, Heidi," she began again; "if that is so, we need never pray at all, because the dear God always knows what is good for us much better than we do ourselves."

"Oh, yes; but we mustn't think that we need not pray," said Heidi, growing very earnest; "we ought not to let a day pass by without asking the dear God for everything, everything, so that He may know that we do not forget that all we have comes from Him. For if we do not remember Him, He will not remember us either; the grand-

mamma said so. But, you know, when we do not get what we ask for, we mustn't think that the dear God hasn't heard us, but we must say to Him: 'Now I am sure, dear God, that you know of something much better for me, and so I will be happy because I know that it will all be for the best.'"

"How did you come to think of all this, Heidi?" asked Klara.

"First the grandmamma told me about it, and then it happened just as she said, and now I know it. But I think, Klara," continued Heidi, sitting up in bed, "that to-night we ought to thank the dear God more than ever, because He has made us so happy to-day; for now you can walk, Klara."

"Yes, indeed, Heidi; you are quite right, and I am glad that you reminded me of it, for I was so happy that I almost forgot it."

Then the two children folded their hands and thanked their heavenly Father, each in her own way, for the precious gift He had that day bestowed on Klara who had so long been a patient sufferer.

The next morning the grandfather said to the children that he thought it was time to ask the grandmamma to come to see them, as they had something to show her. But the children had a different plan; they wanted to give the grand-

mamma a great surprise. Klara must first learn to use her feet a little better so that she would be able to walk a short distance with no other support than Heidi's arm; but no hint of this must reach the grandmamma.

The grandfather was now eagerly consulted as to how soon that might be, and when he said in about a week, the children sat down and wrote the grandmamma an urgent invitation to come to see them at that time; but not a word did they say about anything new that they had to show her.

The next few days were some of the most delightful of Klara's visit to the mountains. Every morning she awoke with the glad thought: "I am well! I am well! I need not sit in the wheel-chair any longer, but can walk about like other people."

Then came the exercise in walking, and with each day that passed she found it easier, and she could walk farther. The unusual exercise gave her such an appetite that the grandfather's already generous slices of bread and butter grew larger and larger, and it was with a feeling of great satisfaction that he stood by and saw them disappear. He now always brought out a large pitcher of foaming milk, too, and filled bowl after bowl for the children.

Thus the end of the week soon came, and with it the day which was to bring the grandmamma.

CHAPTER XXIII

A FAREWELL, BUT TO MEET AGAIN

THE day before her intended visit the grandmamma sent the children a letter telling them just when to expect her. This letter Peter brought with him early the next morning on his way to the pasture. The grandfather and the children were already out of doors, as also were Swanli and Bearli, tossing their heads playfully and sniffing the fresh morning air, while the children stroked their glossy coats and wished them a pleasant trip up to the pasture. The grandfather stood looking first at the rosy faces of the children and then at the sleek little creatures standing near, and both must have pleased him well, for he smiled down contentedly at them.

Peter now came along. When he saw the little group before the door, his steps lagged and he held the letter out to the grandfather from afar; as soon as it had left his hand he jumped back as though something had frightened him; then he cast a timid glance behind him as though expecting to see something there that he dreaded; then, with a leap, he was off up the mountain.

"Grandfather," said Heidi, who had been watch-

ing Peter with a puzzled look on her face, "grandfather, why does Peter act so strangely? He makes me think of the big Turk when he sees a stick threatening him, and shies off, and tosses his head and makes leaps into the air."

"Perhaps Peter sees a stick that is threatening him, and one that he richly deserves, too," was the grandfather's reply.

It was only to just beyond the first turn that Peter ran so quickly: as soon as he was sure that he was out of sight he stopped and looked anxiously in every direction. Suddenly he gave a quick leap forward, at the same time casting a shy glance behind him as though he had felt a hand on his collar. From behind every bush and rock Peter expected to see the officer from Frankfort rush out and seize him. The longer this state of anxious expectancy lasted, the greater grew Peter's terror, until at last he had not a moment's peace.

When Peter had gone Heidi went indoors to set her house in order, that the grandmamma might find everything neat and tidy. To see Heidi so busy with her household duties, bustling into every nook and corner of the hut, was so amusing to Klara that she always liked to watch her.

In this way the first hours of the morning passed before the children were aware of it, and now the

grandmamma might appear at almost any moment. Klara and Heidi were quite ready to receive her and went out in front of the hut, where they sat down side by side on the bench and waited in eager expectation. They were soon joined by the grandfather who had been out for a walk and had brought back with him a great bunch of deep blue gentians that looked so lovely in the bright sunshine that the children both exclaimed with delight at the sight of them. The grandfather took the flowers into the house. Again and again Heidi jumped up and ran to where she could look down the mountain to see whether the grandmamma were yet in sight.

At last she saw coming up the steep path just what she had expected. First came the guide, then the white horse with the grandmamma on his back, and last of all a man carrying a huge bundle of wraps, for the grandmamma would risk no trip up the mountain without ample protection against the weather.

Nearer and nearer they came; now they were before the hut, and the grandmamma saw the children from her seat on the horse.

"What is this? Why, Klara, my child, you are not in your chair! What does it mean?" she cried in alarm as she dismounted hastily. But before she had taken a step she clasped her hands in wonder, and exclaimed excitedly:—

"But can this really be my little Klara? Why, child, your cheeks are round and rosy as an apple! I hardly know you, my dear!"

Now the grandmamma rushed to clasp Klara in her arms, but before she could reach her, Heidi had slipped to her feet and was quickly followed by Klara who rested one arm on her little friend's shoulder; then the two walked calmly off together as though setting out for a stroll. The grandmamma could not move from the spot, so frightened was she, for she could not think otherwise than that Heidi was undertaking something very reckless.

But what was this she saw?

Erect and sure-footed, Klara was walking beside Heidi; now the two turned and came back, their faces beaming, their cheeks red with excitement.

Then the grandmamma rushed toward them, and between smiles and tears, kissed first Klara, then Heidi, and then Klara again. So great was her joy that she found no words to express it.

Suddenly her eyes fell on the Alm-Uncle standing beside the bench and looking down with a happy smile at the group before him. Slipping her arm through Klara's, and holding it firmly in her own, she walked with her to the bench, exclaiming over and over again in great joy that

the child was really walking. When Klara was seated, the grandmamma turned and grasped both the old man's hands.

"My dear Uncle! My dear Uncle! For how much we have to thank you! We owe all this to you—to your care and nursing"—

"And to our dear Lord's sunshine and pure mountain air," interrupted the grandfather with a smile.

"Yes, and surely to Swanli's nice rich milk, too," called out Klara. "Grandmamma, you have no idea how much goat's milk I can drink, and how good it is!"

"Your cheeks speak for you, my dear," said the grandmamma laughingly. "Really, I should hardly know you! And you are round and plump as I had never supposed you could be! You have grown tall, too, Klara. It hardly seems possible! I can't look at you enough! But now we must send a telegram to your father in Paris; he must come at once. I will not tell him why; it will be the happiest surprise of his life. My dear Uncle, how can we manage it? The guides have gone, haven't they?"

"Yes, they are gone," replied the Uncle; "but if you are in a hurry we will send the goatherd down with it. He has time enough."

The grandmamma thought that the joyful news

ought not to be kept from her son for a single day, and so the message should be sent at once.

The Uncle went to the other side of the hut and with his fingers to his lips gave so shrill a whistle that it waked the far-away echoes and was repeated in the cliffs above. In a very short time Peter was seen running down the mountain, for he knew the Uncle's call well. He was as white as chalk, for he felt sure that the Uncle had called him down to be arrested by the officer from Frankfort. Instead, a very harmless looking piece of paper on which the grandmamma had written something was handed to him, and the Uncle told him to take it to the post-office in Dörfli, and say that he himself would pay for it later; for it was not safe to give Peter too much to attend to at once.

Greatly relieved, the boy went off with the grandmamma's message in his hand; he felt that he had escaped for the present, as the Uncle had not called him down to be arrested, and there was no terrible officer in sight.

Now the little company in front of the hut could at last gather quietly about the table. The grandmamma wanted to hear the whole story from beginning to end; how the grandfather had first persuaded Klara to stand a while each day, and then encouraged her to take a step or two; how the trip to the pasture had been planned, and the chair

had been carried off by the wind; how Klara's desire to see the flowers had induced her to take her first walk, and how one thing had thus led to another. It took the children a long time to tell it all, for they were interrupted again and again by the grandmamma's exclamations of wonder, praise and thankfulness, such as: "Is it possible! You are sure it isn't all a dream! And are we really all awake and sitting together in front of the hut? And is this girl with the round and rosy cheeks really my pale and weak little Klara of old?"

The children's joy knew no bounds when they found how successful their well-planned surprise had been, and that it was not over even yet.

Meanwhile Herr Sesemann had attended to his business in Paris and had planned a little surprise of his own. Without sending his mother word, he took the train one fine and sunny morning and rode as far as Basle, where he remained over night. Very early the next morning he continued his journey, for he had been seized by a great longing to see the little daughter from whom he had been separated the whole summer. When he arrived at the hotel in Ragaz he was told that his mother had just gone on her trip up the mountain, which was most welcome news to him. He took a carriage at once and drove as far as Mayenfeld, where he

learned that he could drive on to Dörfli; this he was very glad to do, as he thought that the climb up the mountain would be quite exertion enough for him.

In this Herr Sesemann had made no mistake, for he found the unbroken climb upward both long and wearisome. Again and again he looked for the goatherd's hut which he knew he would find about halfway up, for the path had so often been described to him; but it was nowhere to be seen.

Signs of recent travel were plentiful enough, and in places there were a number of footpaths leading in different directions. Herr Sesemann began to wonder whether he were on the right road, or whether the hut might not be on the other side of the mountain. He looked about him in the hope of seeing some person who could direct him; but nowhere was any one to be seen, nor a sound to be heard, save the sighing of the wind as it swept the mountain, the buzz of the little flies that danced in the sunshine, and the merry voice of a bird that whistled among the branches of a lonely larch. Herr Sesemann stood still and let the mountain breeze fan his hot forehead.

Suddenly he heard some one come running down the mountain. It was Peter with the despatch in his hand; he was not following the path on which Herr Sesemann was standing, but came running

straight down the mountain side. As soon as he had come near enough Herr Sesemann beckoned to him. Slowly and with a terrified air, Peter approached, but with a sideling step, putting forward one foot and dragging the other after it.

"Well, my boy, step up like a man," said Herr Sesemann to encourage him. "Now tell me, will this path take me up to the hut where the old man and the little girl, Heidi, live, and where the people from Frankfort are staying?"

A dull sound of unspeakable terror was the only reply, and Peter dashed off at such speed that he shot head over heels down the steep slope, and then rolled over and over, very much as the wheel-chair had done, with this difference, that fortunately Peter did not go to pieces as had been the case with the chair.

But the despatch fared badly, and was carried off in pieces by the wind.

"What a strangely bashful mountain boy!" remarked Herr Sesemann to himself, for he believed that the mere sight of a stranger had had this surprising effect on the simple-minded son of the Alps.

After watching Peter's swift and violent trip downward for a while, Herr Sesemann continued on his way.

In spite of all his efforts Peter could get no hold

anywhere, but rolled on and on, every now and then adding to his speed by a wonderfully-turned somersault. But this was by no means the most painful part of his suffering just at this moment; much more frightful were the dread and terror which filled him, now that he felt sure that the officer from Frankfort had really arrived. For this stranger who had inquired for the people from Frankfort must be he, of this Peter had no doubt. At the last steep descent, just above Dörfli, Peter was rolled against a bush, where he at last succeeded in getting a hold. A moment he lay there, trying to think what had happened to him.

"Well, well, here comes another! And who will be the next to get a push up yonder and come rolling down like a badly-sewed potato sack?"

It was the baker who was amusing himself with this jest. He had come up here to get a little air after his hot day's work, and had been quietly watching Peter as the boy came rolling down the mountain, very much as the chair had done only a short time before.

Peter jumped to his feet. A new fear had seized him. Evidently the baker knew that the chair had been sent down by a push from up yonder. Without once turning to look back Peter ran up the mountain again.

He would have liked best of all to go home and

hide himself in bed where no one could find him, for that was where he felt safest. But the goats were still up on the pasture, and the Alm-Uncle had told him to be sure to come back soon so that the flock would not be left alone too long. Peter was more afraid of the Uncle than of any one else, and so great was his respect for him that he never would have dared disobey him. So he groaned aloud and limped on, for there was no choice; he was obliged to go up again. But he could run no longer, for his great fear and all the hard knocks he had just received had not failed to affect him. On he went up to the Alm, groaning and limping.

Very soon after meeting Peter, Herr Sesemann had come upon the goatherd's cottage, and so felt assured that he was on the right road. With renewed courage he toiled on, and at last, after a long and weary climb, beheld his goal just ahead of him. There stood the Alm-hut, and above it were the swaying branches of the old pine trees.

Joyfully Herr Sesemann began the last ascent, for it would now be but a few minutes before he would give his little girl a glad surprise. But he had already been seen and recognized by the little party in front of the hut, and they immediately planned something for him which he little expected.

When he had taken the last step up, two of the

little company rose and came to meet him; one was little Heidi whose black eyes were bright with happiness; the other was a taller girl with golden hair and a rosy face, and she rested one arm on Heidi's shoulder as she walked. Herr Sesemann started; then he stood still and stared at the approaching children. Suddenly the tears rushed to his eyes, for memories both sweet and painful rose within him. Just so had Klara's mother looked—a blond young girl with cheeks of softest pink. Herr Sesemann wondered whether he were waking or dreaming.

"Papa, don't you know me?" Klara now called out to him with a face radiant with happiness. "Have I changed so much?"

Then Herr Sesemann rushed toward his daughter and clasped her in his arms.

"Indeed, you are changed! Is it possible? Can it be really true?"

And the overjoyed father stepped back a pace that he might look at her again and assure himself that what he saw would not vanish before his eyes.

"Is it really you, my little Klara?" he exclaimed over and over. Then he took the child in his arms again, after which he had to look at her once more to be sure that it was really his little daughter who stood there so straight before him.

The grandmamma now joined them, for she

could wait no longer to see her son's happy face.

"Well, my dear boy, what do you think of this?" she called out to him. "The surprise you gave us was delightful, but the one we had in store for you was much more so, was it not?" and the happy mother gave her son a most loving greeting.

"But now, my dear," she continued, "you must come with me to where you see our Alm-Uncle over there; he is our greatest benefactor."

"Certainly; and Klara's little playmate, our little Heidi here, must have a hearty greeting, too," said Herr Sesemann, as he shook Heidi's hand.

"Well, my child, and are you always bright and well up here on the Alm? But that is a needless question, for no Alpine rose could look more fresh and blooming. It is a joy to me, a great joy, to see you so, my child."

Heidi's face, too, was aglow with happiness as she looked up at the kind friend who had always been so good to her. That he should find so great a joy up here on her dearly loved Alm made her heart beat high with happiness.

The grandmamma now took her son over to the Alm-Uncle, and while the two men gave each other a cordial grasp of the hand, and Herr Sesemann began to express his deep gratitude and unbounded astonishment at what seemed a perfect miracle to him, the grandmamma went on a little way, for



He stood still and stared at the approaching children.

she had already said all this, and she wanted to look at the old pine trees again.

Here another surprise awaited her. Just under the trees, where the long branches had left an open place, stood a great bunch of the loveliest deep blue gentians, as fresh and bright as though they were growing there. The grandmamma clasped her hands in delight.

"How lovely! How exquisite! What a charming sight!" she exclaimed again and again. "Heidi, my dear child, come over here! Did you do this to please me? They are perfectly beautiful!"

The children were there in a moment.

"No, no; it really wasn't I," said Heidi. "But I know who did it."

"That is the way they look up on the pasture, grandmamma, only much lovelier," Klara here interrupted. "But you must guess who brought the flowers down from the pasture for you early this morning," and Klara smiled so happily as she spoke that for a moment the grandmamma thought perhaps the child herself had been up there this morning. But that was hardly possible.

A slight noise just behind the pine trees was now heard. It was Peter, who meanwhile had climbed back up the mountain as far as this. But on seeing the stranger with the Uncle, he had gone

a long way round, with the intention of stealing quietly away behind the great trees. But the grandmamma had recognized him, and a sudden thought came to her. Perhaps Peter had picked the flowers for her, and was now slipping off so quietly because he was too bashful and modest to come forward. She could not let him go away without some little reward for his thoughtfulness.

"Come, my boy, step up bravely, and do not be afraid!" the grandmamma called out to him as she peered in among the branches.

Rigid with fear, Peter stood motionless. After all he had suffered he had no strength left with which to resist. He had only one thought: "Now it's all over!" Every hair on his head stood on end; and with a face pale and drawn with fear he stepped out from behind the pine trees.

"Come, step up briskly! Don't hang back so!" said the grandmamma to encourage him. "Now tell me, did you do that?"

Peter dared not raise his eyes from the ground, and so did not see where the grandmamma's finger was pointing. He had seen the Uncle standing at the corner of the hut, and had noticed that the old man's gray eyes were fixed steadily on him; and beside the Uncle stood that most terrible of all persons, the officer from Frankfort. Trembling in every limb, Peter brought forth a single sound; it was "Yes."

"Well, well, what is there so terrible about it?"

"That it—that it—that it went to pieces and can't be put together again," Peter stammered out with a great effort, while his knees shook so that he could hardly stand.

The grandmamma turned and went toward the hut.

"My dear Uncle, is the poor boy really crazy?" she asked with ready sympathy.

"Not at all; not at all," the Uncle assured her. "It is only this: the boy was the wind that carried the wheel-chair down the mountain, and now he expects his well-deserved punishment."

The grandmamma could hardly believe it, for she thought the boy did not look at all malicious, and he could have no reason for wishing to destroy the much-needed chair.

But Peter's confession had only convinced the Uncle of what he had suspected very soon after the supposed accident. The fierce glances that Peter had always cast at Klara, as well as other evidences of the dislike with which he regarded the visitor at the Alm-hut, had not escaped the Uncle. Putting one thing with another, he had guessed just what had occurred, and now explained it all very clearly to the grandmamma. The kind lady grew quite excited over it, and when he had finished exclaimed:—

"No, no, my dear Uncle; the poor boy must not be punished still further. We must be just. Here come all these strangers from Frankfort, and for weeks at a time deprive him of Heidi, his only joy—and a very great joy she is, too—while day after day he sits alone in his disappointment. No, no; we must be just; his anger got the better of him, and drove him to a revenge that was very foolish. But who is not foolish when he is angry?"

Whereupon the grandmamma hurried back to Peter who was still trembling and shaking. She sat down on the bench that stood under the pine trees, and said kindly:—

"Now come, my boy, come stand here beside me. I have something to say to you. Stop shaking and trembling, and listen to me. You pushed the wheel-chair down the mountain so that it should go to pieces. That was very wicked, and you knew it very well; you deserve a severe punishment for it, and that you know also; to escape it you have been put to great pains so that no one should find out what you have done. But you see, when a person does something wrong and thinks that nobody knows it, he makes a great mistake. The dear God in heaven sees and knows everything, and when he knows that some one is trying to keep a wicked deed to himself, he quickly wakes the little watchman that is put into every one at his

birth, and who sleeps until the person within whose breast he is hidden does something wrong. This little watchman has a sharp stick with which he pricks and pricks the wrong-doer until he has not a moment's peace. And he has a voice, too, with which he torments the guilty one by calling over and over: 'Now it will all be found out! Now they are coming to get you and punish you!' And so the evil-doer lives in constant terror, and is never happy, never. Is not that the way it has been with you lately, Peter?"

Peter nodded in a most downcast way, but also with the air of one who knows, for this had been his experience exactly.

"And you made still another mistake," continued the grandmamma; "for see how your evil deed helped the one you intended to harm by it. Because Klara had no chair in which to be wheeled to the place where grew the pretty flowers she wanted to see, she tried very hard to use her feet to get there, and so she learned to walk; and since then she walks better and better with each day, so that if she stays long enough she may be able to go to the pasture on every fine day, much oftener than she could have been wheeled there in her chair. And so, you see, Peter, how the dear Lord can take an evil deed and turn it into good for the one whom it was meant to injure, while the evil-

doer has all the unhappiness and disappointment. Now do you understand it well, Peter? And will you think of it whenever you want to do something wicked? And will you remember about the little watchman within you who will trouble you with his voice and prick you with his sharp stick? Will you remember that, Peter?"

"Yes, I will," answered the boy, still very downhearted, for as yet he did not know how it would all end; for there stood the officer from Frankfort still talking to the Uncle.

"Very well, then we are through with the matter," said the grandmamma in conclusion. "And now you shall have something that you like by which to remember the people from Frankfort. So tell me, my boy, is there anything that you have wished for—something that you would like to have? What was it? What would you like best?"

On hearing this, Peter raised his head and stared at the grandmamma with eyes grown round with wonder. He had still been expecting some frightful punishment, when suddenly he was told that he was to get something he liked very much. The boy did not know what to make of it.

"Yes, yes, I mean what I say," said the grandmamma; "you shall have something you like by which to remember the people from Frankfort, and to show you that they have forgotten the wrong

you did them. Do you understand me now, my boy?"

It began to dawn on Peter that he was not to be punished at all, and that the good lady sitting there before him had rescued him from the much-dreaded officer. He felt a sudden and great relief, as though a heavy stone that had lain on him and threatened to crush him had been rolled away. But by this time he had also discovered that it is best to confess at once the wrong one has done, and so he said:—

"And I lost the paper, too."

The grandmamma had to think for a moment before she understood what he meant; then she said very kindly:—

"That is right; I am glad you told me. Always tell what is wrong, and then it will soon be righted. And what is it that you would like to have?"

Now Peter was to have his dearest earthly wish granted. He grew quite dizzy at the thought of it. There rose before him all the beautiful things that he had so often seen at the yearly fair at Mayenfeld, and which he had longed for, knowing, however, that they were far beyond him, for they all cost ten pfennigs, and never in all his life had Peter had more than half of that sum at a time. There were the pretty red whistles which he would find so useful in calling the goats. Then there

were the much-desired knives with round handles; they were called toad-stickers, and quicker work could be done with them in a hazel-hedge than with any other.

Peter stood lost in deep thought, for he could not decide which of the two to choose. Suddenly a happy thought came to him by which he could put off the decision until the time of the next fair.

"Ten pfennigs," he said with great firmness.

The grandmamma laughed.

"That is not over much. Well, come here."

She drew forth her purse, and took out a large round thaler, on which she laid two ten-pfennig pieces.

"There, we will make a straight reckoning," she continued, "and I will explain it to you. Here are just ten pfennigs for every week in the year; so on each Sunday of the whole year you can take ten pfennigs to spend during the week."

"As long as I live?" asked Peter quite innocently.

At that the grandmamma laughed so heartily that her son and the Uncle stopped talking to hear what was going on over there that was so amusing.

The grandmamma was still laughing.

"You shall have it, my boy," she said at last. "I will add it to my will. Did you hear that, my son? And afterward you must put it into yours.

It shall read: 'Ten pfennigs a week to Goat-Peter during his lifetime.' "

Herr Sesemann laughed, too, as he nodded assent.

Peter looked down again at the gift he held in his hand to assure himself that it was really there. Then he said:—

"God be thanked!"

Whereupon he ran off with most unusually long leaps; but this time he did not slip and fall, for it was not fear that was driving him; he was running because he was happier than he had ever been before in all his life. All his fear and anxiety were over, and he was to have ten pfennigs every week of his life.

A little later, when the happy party gathered around the table in front of the hut had finished their dinner, and were still sitting together talking about a number of things, Klara turned to her father whose face was beaming with delight and wore a little happier smile with each time he looked at her; taking his hand in hers, she said with an eagerness that sounded little like the old listless Klara:—

"Oh, papa, if you only knew all that the grandfather has done for me! So much every day that I shall never be able to tell it all; but I'll not forget it as long as I live. And I am always thinking if

there were only something I could do for the dear good grandfather; or if I could give him something that he would enjoy, even though I could never give him half the happiness he has given me."

"That is just what I wish more than anything else, my dear child," said her father. "Constantly I have been trying to think of some way by which we can show our gratitude to our benefactor, even to a slight degree."

Herr Sesemann rose and went over to where the Alm-Uncle was sitting beside the grandmamma with whom he had been carrying on a most lively conversation. He too, rose now, and Herr Sesemann grasped his hand as he said in a most cordial manner:—

"My dear friend, let us have a word together. You will understand me when I tell you that for many a long year I have not been truly happy. What were all my wealth and prosperity to me when I looked at my poor child whom no amount of money could make well or happy? Next to our Father in heaven I have you to thank for the child's recovery, and for the great joy that has come into my life as well as hers. Now tell me, is there no way in which I can show my gratitude? What you have done for us can never be repaid; but all that it is in my power to do, I place at your command. Tell me, my friend, what you will let me do for you?"

The Uncle's face wore a pleasant smile as he listened in silence to all the happy father said.

"Herr Sesemann will believe me when I tell him that the wonderful recovery up here on our Alm has given me great happiness also; all that I have done has been fully repaid by it," the Uncle now said with his usual firmness. "I thank you for your kind intentions, Herr Sesemann, but there is nothing that I need. As long as I live the child and I will have enough. But I have one wish; if it were fulfilled I should be free from anxiety for the rest of my days."

"Let me hear it, my friend; let me hear it!" Herr Sesemann urged.

"I am growing old," continued the grandfather, "and shall not be here much longer. When I go, I can leave Heidi nothing, and she has no relations; that is, only one, who, I fear, would try to make profit out of her. If you would give me the assurance, Herr Sesemann, that Heidi will never have to go out into the world to earn her living among strangers, you will have repaid me fully for all that I have done for you and your child."

"But my dear friend, there could never be any danger of that," Herr Sesemann now broke forth; "the child belongs to us. Ask my mother, ask Klara; never, as long as they live, will they give little Heidi up to any one else. But if it will ease

your mind, my friend, here is my hand on it; I promise you that never in all her life shall the child be obliged to go among strangers to earn a living. I will arrange matters so that she will be provided for even beyond my lifetime. But there is something more I have to say. The child's nature is such that whatever the circumstances, she would never be happy away from home; we have seen that. But she has made friends. I know of one who at present is still in Frankfort; but he is winding up his affairs with the intention of spending the rest of his days quietly in the place of his choice. It is my friend, the doctor, who will be here some time during the coming autumn to ask your advice with regard to settling in this neighborhood, for he was happier here in your company and that of the child than anywhere else. So you see, Heidi will soon have two protectors here to watch over her. May they both be spared to her for many a year!"

"God grant it may be so!" the grandmamma here interrupted them to show her hearty agreement with all her son had said, and she shook the grandfather's hand for a long time with great cordiality. Then she suddenly threw her arms around Heidi who was standing close by, and drawing the child toward her said:—

"And you, my dear Heidi, you must also be

asked. Come tell me; have you no wish that you would like to have fulfilled?"

"Why yes, of course, I have," was Heidi's quick reply as she looked up joyfully into the grandmamma's face.

"There, that is right; out with it!" said the grandmamma encouragingly. "What is it you would like to have, child?"

"I should like to have my bed in Frankfort, with the three big pillows and the thick blanket; then the grandmother will no longer have to lie downhill at night so that she can hardly breathe; and she will be warm enough, too, and will not need to put the shawl on when she goes to bed to keep herself from being so dreadfully cold."

Heidi said all this without once stopping to take breath, so eager was she to get her wish.

"But what is this you are telling me, my dear Heidi!" exclaimed the grandmamma quite excitedly. "I am glad you reminded me. In our happiness we are apt to forget what we should think of first of all. When the dear Lord sends us a joy we should immediately remember those who are in want. We will telegraph to Frankfort at once so that Fräulein Rottenmeier can have the bed packed up to-day, and in two days it will be here. God willing, the grandmother shall sleep well in it."

In great glee Heidi danced all around the grandmamma; but suddenly she stopped and said quickly:—

"But I ought surely to run down to the grandmother now for a little while; she will be anxious again if I do not come for such a long time."

Heidi could hardly wait to bring the grandmother the joyful news she had for her; moreover, she remembered how sad the poor woman had been the last time that she had been there.

"No, no, Heidi; what are you thinking of? When one has visitors it is not polite to run off and leave them," said the grandfather reprovingly.

But the grandmamma came to Heidi's assistance.

"My dear Uncle, the child is not so far wrong after all," she said; "the poor grandmother has had to do without Heidi for a long time on my account. Now let us all go together to see her; and I think I will stay there until my horse comes, and then we can continue our journey, and I can send the telegram to Frankfort as soon as we get to Dörfli. My son, what do you think of my plan?"

Herr Sesemann had so far had no opportunity to speak of his intentions. He therefore had to ask his mother not to start at once, but to remain where she was for a few moments that he might tell her what his plans were.

Herr Sesemann had intended to take a little journey through Switzerland with his mother, hoping to take Klara with him for a short distance, if he found her well enough. Now it had so happened that he could take the whole of this most delightful trip in the company of his daughter; he therefore wished to put it off no longer, but to enjoy it during these lovely days of the late summer. He proposed to stay in Dörfli over night and early in the morning bring Klara down from the Alm and then go with her to join the grandmamma at Ragaz, from where the journey would then be begun at once.

Klara was somewhat taken aback at the prospect of leaving the Alm so suddenly, but there was so much pleasure combined with it, and besides there was little time left her for regrets.

The grandmamma had already risen, and with Heidi's hand in hers, was just about to lead the way when suddenly she paused.

"But what in the world shall we do with Klara?" she asked in a startled tone, for it had just occurred to her that the walk would be entirely too much for the child's strength.

But the grandfather had already taken his little charge in his arms as usual, and with a firm and steady step was following close behind the grandmamma, who nodded back at the two with a look

of great contentment on her face. Last of all came Herr Sesemann, and so the procession went on down the mountain.

Heidi was so happy that she danced and skipped along by the side of the grandmamma, who wanted to hear all about the blind grandmother; how she was, and how she lived, especially during the very cold weather of the hard winters up here.

Heidi told her everything, for she knew very well how matters stood in the goatherd's hut, and how the grandmother often sat wrapped up in her corner shivering with the cold. She knew also what the grandmother had to eat and what she did not have.

The grandmamma listened with great interest until they stood before the door of the little house.

Brigitte was just hanging out one of Peter's two blouses, so that he might have a clean one to put on when the one he wore was soiled. She saw the approaching visitors and rushed into the house.

"They are all going, mother," she announced; "there is a whole procession of them, and the Alm-Uncle is accompanying them, and is carrying the sick girl."

"Oh dear! then it is really going to be as I feared," sighed the grandmother. "Did you see whether Heidi was with them? Oh, I hope they will let her come in and shake hands with me. If I can only hear the child's voice once more!"

At this moment the door was thrown open and Heidi came bounding into the room. Instantly she was at the grandmother's side, with her arms around the old woman's neck.

"Grandmother! grandmother! My bed is coming from Frankfort, and the three big pillows, and the thick blanket, too. In two days it will all be here; the grandmamma says so."

Heidi could not tell it all fast enough in her eagerness to see the grandmother's delight at the good news. She smiled, but said a little sadly:—

"Oh, what a kind lady she must be! And I ought to be glad that she is taking you with her, Heidi; but I shall not survive it long."

"What? What is that? Who told the good old grandmother any such thing?" asked a cheery voice, and some one took the grandmother's hand and pressed it heartily. It was the grandmamma, who had kept close behind Heidi and so had heard all that was said. "No, no; we have no such idea! Heidi is going to stay here with the grandmother and be her joy. We shall want to see the child again, but we will come to her. Every summer will see us at the Alm, for we have reason to offer special thanks to our Father in heaven each year here in the place where so great a miracle was wrought on our child."

On hearing this the light of true happiness came

to the grandmother's face and in speechless gratitude she pressed the hand of good Frau Sesemann again and again, while two great tears of joy rolled down the withered cheeks. Heidi had instantly seen the look of joy on the grandmother's face and was perfectly happy herself.

"And now it has really come just as it says in the hymn I read you last, hasn't it? Surely the bed from Frankfort is 'what is best,' isn't it, grandmother?" she asked as she crept closer to the old woman's side.

"Oh, yes, Heidi, and there is so much else, so much else in which the Lord is gracious to me," said the grandmother deeply moved. "And is it possible that there are such good people who trouble themselves about a poor old woman, and do so much for her? There is nothing that so strengthens our trust in a loving Father in heaven who does not forget even the least of His children, as does the knowledge that there are such kind people, full of love and pity for a poor, useless old woman such as I am."

"My good friend," the grandmamma here interrupted her, "in the sight of our heavenly Father we are all equally unworthy, and we are all in equal need of His merciful remembrance. And now we must say good-bye, but to meet again; for when we come to the Alm next summer, we shall

come to see the grandmother, too; she will never be forgotten."

Then Frau Sesemann took the grandmother's hand once more and shook it cordially.

But she did not get away quite as soon as she had thought, for the grandmother could not cease thanking her and wishing that all the good gifts the dear Lord had to bestow might be showered on her and all her dear ones.

But at last Herr Sesemann and his mother were on their way down the mountain, and the grandfather was carrying Klara up to the Alm again, while Heidi hopped up and down unceasingly as she kept on beside them, for the grandmother's pleasant prospects had made her so happy that she had to jump for joy with every step.

On the next morning, however, there were hot tears shed by the little visitor when she realized that she was now to leave the beautiful Alm where she had felt better than ever before in all her life. But Heidi sought to comfort her, saying:—

"It will hardly seem a moment before the summer will be here again, and then you will come back, and it will be more lovely than ever before. Then you will be able to walk right from the beginning, and we can go up to the pasture with the goats every day and see the flowers, and all the fun will begin just as soon as you get here."

Herr Sesemann had come, as he had said, to get his little daughter. He was now standing beside the grandfather, for the two men had still much to talk over. At Heidi's words Klara dried her eyes, for she felt somewhat comforted.

"Say good-bye to Peter for me," she said, "and to all the goats, especially Snowhopli. Oh, if I could only give Swanli a present! She has helped so much to make me well."

"You can do that easily enough," said Heidi. "Send her a little salt; you know she likes to lick the salt from grandfather's hand when she comes home in the evening."

Klara was glad to get this suggestion.

"Oh, then I will send her a hundred pounds of salt from Frankfort," she exclaimed joyously. "Little Swanli, too, shall have something by which to remember me."

Herr Sesemann now beckoned to the children, for he was ready to start. This time Klara rode down on the grandmother's white horse, for she was no longer in need of a bath-chair.

Heidi ran to the very edge of the decline and stood there waving her hand to Klara until the last bit of horse and rider had disappeared.

The bed came, and the grandmother sleeps so well in it every night that it must surely give her

new strength. Nor did the kind grandmamma forget what Heidi had told her of the cold winter weather up on the mountain. She sent a whole bale of goods to the goatherd's hut; and in it were so many things to keep the grandmother warm, that she will never again have to sit in the corner and shiver.

Down in Dörfli a large house is being built. The doctor has come, and for the present is back in his old lodgings. At the advice of his friend, he bought the old building in which the grandfather and Heidi lived in the winter and which long ago had been a fine mansion, as the great room with the handsome stove and beautiful wainscoting plainly show. The doctor is having this part of the house rebuilt for his own use, while the other side is being remodelled into winter quarters for Heidi and her grandfather; for the doctor knows that the old man has an independent spirit and must have his own home. Back of the house there will be a well-built, warm goat-stable where Swanli and Bearli will spend their winters in comfort.

The doctor and the Alm-Uncle are closer friends with every day that passes, and as they climb about in the building to see what progress is being made, their talk is chiefly about Heidi, for their greatest pleasure in the house is the thought that the happy child is to live there with them.

"My dear friend," said the doctor a short time ago, as he was standing beside the Uncle on an unfinished wall, "you must look at this matter as I do. I have all the joy of the child, just as though I were her next of kin after you, and so I want to share the responsibility also and provide for her as best I can. In this way I shall also have a claim to our Heidi, and can hope that in my old age she will remain with me and care for me, which is my dearest wish. She will get all that is mine, just as though she were my own child, and so we need not be anxious about her future when we have to leave her, you and I."

The Alm-Uncle pressed the doctor's hand; although he said nothing, his friend could read in the old man's eyes how his words had moved and pleased him.

Meanwhile Heidi and Peter sat beside the grandmother, and the first had so much to tell and the other so much to listen to, that in their eagerness they both moved closer and closer to the happy grandmother.

There was so much to tell her of what had happened all through the long summer, for they had been together so little in all that time.

And of the three, it was hard to tell which looked the happiest because they were together again and had so much to say and to hear about

all the wonderful things that had happened. But just now, mother Brigitte's face wore the happiest look of all, for with Heidi's help she was at last hearing the story of the never-ending ten-pfennig piece told clearly and so that she could understand it. But finally the grandmother said:—

"Read me a hymn of praise and thanksgiving, Heidi. It seems to me that I can never cease to praise and thank our dear Father in heaven for all that He has done for us."

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